THE 2022 PNG NATIONAL GENERAL ELECTIONS OBSERVATION STUDY REPORT: THE CASE OF SEVEN ELECTORATES IN THE HIGHLANDS REGION

Edited by:
Jeremy Goro
Osborne O. Sanida

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Jeremy Goro
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The Papua New Guinea National Research Institute (PNG NRI) is an independent statutory authority established by an Act of Parliament in 1988 and confirmed by the IASER (Amendment) Act 1993.

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(a) The promotion of research into Papua New Guinea society and the economy; and,
(b) The undertaking of research into social, political and economic problems of Papua New Guinea in order to enable practical solutions to such problems to be formulated.

The opinions expressed in this report are those of the authors and not necessarily the views of the Papua New Guinea National Research Institute.
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### Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **APO**  Assistant Presiding Officer
- **ARO**  Assistant Returning Officer
- **BPs**  Ballot Papers
- **BV**  Block Voting
- **CaBV**  Control and Block Voting
- **CDP**  Christian Democratic Party
- **DPLLGG**  Department of Provincial and Local Level Government
- **DV**  Distributive Voting
- **EES**  Electronic Electoral System
- **EHP**  Eastern Highlands Province
- **EO**  Electoral Officers
- **IP**  Ialibu-Pangia
- **LPV**  Limited Preferential Voting
- **LLG**  Local-level government
- **MP**  Member of Parliament
- **NGE**  National General Election
- **NGP**  New Generation Party
- **NSI**  National Sports Institute
- **OLIPPAC**  Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates
- **OLNLLGGE**  Organic Law on National and Local Level Government Elections
- **PANGU**  Papua and Niugini Union Pati
- **PNC**  People’s National Congress Party
- **PNGEC**  Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission
- **PNGP**  Papua New Guinea Party
- **PO**  Presiding Officers
- **PP**  People’s Party
- **RO**  Returning Officers
- **RoW**  Return of Writs
- **SHP**  Southern Highlands Province
- **SOP**  Swapping of Preferences
- **TN**  Tambul-Nebilyer
- **ULP**  United Labour Party
- **WRS**  Ward Record System
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- PNG NRI Council for endorsing the Project and Overseer of the Project through the Office of the Chairman;
- PNG NRI Election Observation Project Team comprising Jeremy Goro, Project Coordinator; William Kipongi (Election Observer); Joseph Kaile (Election Observer); and Wendy Keimelo (Project Administrative Assistant);
- Local observers Thomas Solepa and Waizora Thompson (Daulo Open); Wilson Thompson (Eastern Highlands Provincial Seat); Joel Yaki and Rose Enge (Ialibu-Pangia Open); Rev Simon Sakul and Susan Aba (North Waghi Open); Able Bani and Ben Joel (Karimui-Nomane Open); Joshua Kui (Tambul-Nebilyer Open), and Miriam Maliam (Wapenamanda Open);
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Dr. Osborne Sanida, Director, PNGNRI

Disclaimer

The report was compiled and edited by Jeremy Goro and Osborne Sanida based on electorate observation reports by the Election Observers. The views expressed in the electorate observation reports (in Sections 4 to 9) represent those of the observers who carried out the study and do not necessarily represent the views of the PNG NRI nor the Australian High Commission nor the other parties mentioned in the report. All errors and omissions are therefore the responsibility of the observers who wrote their respective electorate observation reports.
Members of the observation team

This report was prepared by the PNG NRI Observation Team consisting of the following members:

1. **Daulo Open Electorate observers:**
   - Thomas Solepa – local observer
   - Waizora Thompson – local observer

2. **EHP observer:**
   - Wilson Thompson – candidate and volunteer observer

3. **Ialibu-Pangia Open Electorate observers:**
   - Joel Yaki – local observer
   - Rose Enge – local observer

4. **North-Waghi Open Electorate observers:**
   - Rev Simon Sakul – local observer
   - Susan Aba – local observer

5. **Karimui-Nomane Open Electorate observers:**
   - Ben Joel – local observer
   - Abel Bani – local observer

6. **Tambul-Nebilyer Open Electorate observers:**
   - Joseph Kaile – PNG NRI officer
   - Joshua Kuk – local observer

7. **Wapenamanda Open Electorate observers:**
   - William Kipongi – PNG NRI officer
   - Miriam Maliam – local observer

The Observation Team’s work was coordinated on the ground by the Project Coordinator, Jeremy Goro.
Executive Summary

As the lead research institute in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the primary role of PNG NRI is to carry out independent research and analysis on a wide range of public policy issues and then offer policy prescriptions on how public policy might be developed and carried out in response to different policy challenges. The 2022 Election Observation Study Report (EOSR), which is the focus of this report, was carried out under the ambit of this role.

Using an ethnographical approach and focusing on the seven electorates as cases in point, the report provides an account of what transpired in each electorate during the conduct of the 2022 National General Election (NGE). The report also highlights the shortcomings affecting the orderly and timely conduct of the elections and then proposes some recommendations for strengthening future elections.

The study is driven by four related objectives:

- To provide a real-time observational account of how the 2022 NGE was carried out;
- To determine the anomalies, if any, undermining the conduct of the 2022 NGE. Data from this would assist to determine the extent in which the 2022 NGE has met the expectations of a successful election in terms of campaign, polling and counting. The aim is to determine whether the overall conduct of the election has subscribed to the ideals of a democratically held election of being free and fair, devoid of undue influence and conforming to the legitimate guidelines for conducting elections. A key concern underpinning this study has been on whether the NGE has gradually improved from the sort of problems identified in the previous elections;
- To provide a complementary data source for different societal actors, including the PNG NRI, to collectively use and engage in the discussions on strengthening elections in PNG; and
- To use the data to explore possible areas of future research on specific areas pertaining to elections and the enabling systems that support the elections.

The study was carried out in July and August 2022, just at the end of the campaign period through to the end of the polling and counting periods. A total of seven electorates in the upper and lower Highlands region were covered in the study. These electorates include:

- Daulo Open (EHP);
- Karimui-Nomane Open (Simbu Province);
- North Waghi Open (Jiwaka Province);
- Tambul-Nebilyer Open (Western Highlands Province (WHP);
- Ialibu-Pangia Open (Southern Highlands Province (SHP);
- Wapenamanda Open (Enga Province); and
- Eastern Highlands Provincial Seat (EHP).

The study used a targeted and convenient sampling technique to select the electorates. The selection of the seven provinces was aimed at gaining more insights into the election issues in the Highlands region given the region’s recurrent volatility in the elections. In addition, the electorates in the provinces were selected based on convenience and the availability of observers willing to carry out each study.

Field data was recorded on an agreed recording template designed and agreed to by the research team. Three main areas were the subject of data collection. These were the:

- Campaign observation data;
- polling observation data; and
- counting and declaration observation data.

Based on the template and framework, the main findings of the study were with regards to the three areas mentioned above. In terms of campaign strategies, the common ones observed were:

- **Alliances**: Professional and political party alliances and network were also common. Alliances were also observed in the form of tribal alliances or alliances along segregated areas of the electorates especially in light of the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system. That is, candidates align themselves with other candidates to share their second and third preferences of votes.
• **Collaboration of candidates:** Candidates were collaborating with other candidates from other villages, tribes and areas to maximise their chances of winning, considering the LPV system that was being used.

• **Feasting:** Food and drinks were seen to be distributed at all the campaign gatherings.

• **Invitations:** Invited candidates gave money to the coordinators of the host candidates’ (campaign houses) for the upkeep of their campaign houses.

• **Merchandise:** Posters, banners, billboards, stickers on vehicles, T-shirts and caps were used by candidates and their parties.

• **Public rallies:** Hosting rallies was a common campaign strategy. Candidates attended to speak at rallies organised by their coordinators or generally as an avenue for public dissemination of their policies. Different rival candidates hosted gatherings or rallies entertaining huge crowds. People came in groups performing traditional dances expressing moral and numerical support for the candidate.

• **Social media:** Social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were actively used during campaign. This was expected considering the rollout of ICT infrastructure particularly by Digicel.

• **Party politics:** It was observed that campaigning was dominated by the People’s National Congress (PNC) and Papua and Niugini Union Pati (PANGU) parties, leaving little to no room for other political parties.

• **Political party colours:** Colours were a common campaign strategy to instil a sense of belonging or support to a particular party or candidate. For example, the PNC Party was recognised by red-coloured merchandise while PANGU Pati was recognised by the green colour.

• **Money power:** During campaigns, money power was evident. Generally, it was observed that candidates with more money were becoming more popular and powerful than those who had less money.

• **Campaign houses:** Candidates organised campaign houses to entertain people. Feasts and social activities were organised as part of the entertainment. Candidates were competing to put up campaign houses along the roads and public areas to show that this was their territory and that they have votes in that area.

• **Hausman turned into campaign houses:** Hausman is a big house specifically designed to accommodate only males belonging to a particular clan but in the election, they served as the house of meetings for candidates and their supporters.

• **Nere–Tere (Take and Give):** Nere-Tere or Kaikai na Givim (Tok Pisin) and “Take and Give” is a factor for voters.

• **Pre-polling intimidation and threats:** High powered rifles were carried around openly by supporters and clan members of candidates.

• **Vehicle campaign:** Candidates used convoy of vehicles with full load of supporters to show their numbers.

• **Visitation to families:** Family to family visit programs were initiated by individual candidates’ campaign managers for the candidate to visit each family with a small delegation to secure votes.

• **Clan coordinators:** Most candidates appointed individuals from each clan to make a list of the eligible voters and pay them K100 each.

• **Use of campaign period to settle obligations:** The campaign period was also used to settle traditional obligations such as bride price as well as for reconciliation.

• **Use of songs and chants:** Songs and chants were common during the campaign period to drive the message for candidates and parties.

In terms of polling, the key findings from the observations were:

• **Block voting (BV):** Block voting for convenience and to settle tensions (cooperative voting) was evident. A few people marked ballot papers on behalf of a group. This goes against the democratic principle of “one person one vote” although it may be convenient for the tribe and perhaps the candidates.

• **Common Roll issues:** Perhaps the most disappointing part of polling was when voters did not find their names on the Common Roll. The Common Roll was defective and because of this, community leaders took control of the voting. This brings into question the role of the PNG Electoral Commission (PNGEC) in updating the Common Roll.

• **Compromising of voting material:** Allocated or serialised ballot papers for specified polling locations was not delivered to those locations.
• **Control, block and distributive voting:** In one of the local level governments (LLGs), the ballots from Wards 2, 3 and 4 were all taken to one spot where votes were distributed to candidates accordingly.

• **Disruption of voting:** Disagreements over voting arrangements led to destruction of polling booths at several polling places.

• **Distributive voting (DV):** Ballot papers were distributed to the candidates.

• **Double voting:** Double voting occurs when one person votes more than once. People voted on behalf of other family members in absentia. This practice was evident.

• **Duplication of names:** In some instances, there were duplication of names on the Common Roll.

• **Lack of impartiality by polling officials:** In one instance, the Presiding Officer (PO) made a speech to convince people to vote for the incumbent governor and member for Goroka. POs are supposed to be neutral persons.

• **Lack of security for polling officials:** Polling officials had to flee for their safety, leaving the people to mark the ballot papers in their absence. This brings into question the adequacy of security logistics.

• **Late and slow polling:** Polling generally started late and progressed slowly in most areas. This was due to polling officials not arriving on time at the polling stations.

• **No marking of names on the Common Roll and non-use of inedible ink:** In many instances, polling officials did not mark names off the Common Roll, nor used the inedible ink.

• **Sharing of extra ballot papers:** Extra ballot papers were shared among certain candidates in order to use up all the ballot papers.

• **Threats and intimidation:** In certain instances, groups of youths threatened the people and marked the ballot papers. In other instances, the polling area was highly volatile as supporters of candidates were trying to exert their power to get votes from the voters.

• **Two lines for voting:** Following the new directions from PNGEC, voters were to form two lines for voting, one for males and another for females. This was a positive observation. However, whether voters followed the respective lines is questionable.

In terms of counting and declaration, the main observations were:

• **Control by security forces:** The gate control by security forces was evident in all counting venues, which is a positive observation. However, some scrutineers were denied access.

• **Counting delays:** There were delays in counting due to disputes over the status of the tampered ballot boxes.

• **Counting officials:** Most polling and counting officials were teachers, which made counting easier.

• **Delay in payment for counting officials:** Counting was suspended unnecessarily because of delayed or non-payment of counting officials which prolonged counting.

• **Discrepancy between number of votes and number of eligible voters per Common Roll:** There were more ballot papers than voter numbers on the Common Roll.

• **Double infringement issues:** Issues such as ballot papers marked elsewhere outside of the polling station and by few persons who were not eligible voters, were admitted.

• **Evidence of Block Voting (BV):** When a candidate from a certain village/tribe was eliminated, his second preferences were distributed to a candidate from his area (vote by popularity), which is evidence of BV.

• **Evidence of voting along LLGs:** Candidates scored well in their LLG but did not get many votes from the other LLGs, particularly for primary votes.

• **Media and observers allowed into counting venues:** The media personnel and election observers (both domestic and international) were allowed entry into counting venues to observe the counting, which is a positive observation.

• **Names and numbers not matching:** Some of the marked ballot papers had numbers and names not corresponding.

• **Quality check (common errors with informal ballot papers):** Many ballot papers did not have the signature of the PO at the back of the ballot papers.

• **Representation of counting officials:** Tensions were caused when certain LLGs were not represented as counting officials.
• **Swapping of preferences (SOP):** Where there were two candidates contesting from the same area, the villagers agreed on sharing of the initial primary votes and swapping the second preference (Swapping Preference in Block Voting).

• **Time constraints:** Due to time limitations, Returning Officers (ROs) and the PNGEC were forced not to entertain scrutineers’ objections and disputes over the ballot boxes. Therefore, the scrutineers’ rights and freedom to express their opinion were denied.

Considering the key findings, the main recommendations of the report are:

• There is a need for political party-endorsed candidates at all levels of government, to strengthen the party system.

• State assets should not be used to entice voters, to ensure a level playing field for all candidates contesting.

• Address inducements and threats from other provinces to avoid a situation where certain issues happening in other electorates impact on the conduct of elections in other provinces.

• Dates and schedules must not be changed unnecessarily to avoid creating chaos for election planning and operations.

• Engage only permanent public servants to serve as election officials, which will make it easier to hold election officials accountable under the public service rules and regulations.

• Need for use of proper and legal names for villages, streets, clans and tribes (under the Names Act), to avoid hijacking and rigging of ballot papers, when names are confusing and illegitimate.

• The Common Roll must be updated and verified by the NID Office or verified by Village Court officials, councillors, pastors and village recorders with penalty for default, in order to ensure integrity of the Common Roll.

• Voting must be free, fair and safe where every eligible voter must be allowed to vote freely, fairly and safely in the secret booths to ensure that the outcome of the election is legitimate and credible.

• Counting/scrutiny of ballots should be localised in districts where votes are counted at each polling station with data transmitted to the tally room in the district and central tally room at PNGEC headquarters on the same day via electronic means. This will cut out illegal play in transporting of ballot boxes.

• Security operations must be more effective and efficient where security coordination should be such that all polling stations go into the polls on the same day. This should be considered for future elections.

• There is need for review of the qualification of candidates to ensure that members are qualified (skilled) and with integrity as leaders when they are voted in.

• There is need for at least three to five electoral commissioners through a change in law so that decisions are made by the chief electoral commissioner with the commissioners, which will be more informed than having one person making decisions.

• Introduction of the Electronic Electoral System (EES) through introduction and implementation of the electronic roll (e-roll) and e-voting with the use of e-identity which will at least reduce the irregularities of elections.

• Strengthen the Ward Record System (WRS) whereby the population information can be used to verify the Common Roll and eliminate ghost names for each polling station.

The report concludes that the constant shifting of dates and delay in preparing the Common Roll, polling stations and polling dates casts doubts on the integrity of the elections even if they are conducted properly. The people of PNG have their own assumptions and bias against the PNGEC and it is good for the country that elections must be conducted as required by law and on time instead of creating doubts on the integrity of the election process in PNG.

This Observation Report is a contribution by the PNG NRI with the endorsement of its Council, to improve future elections in PNG. It is to be also mentioned that the PNG NRI is aware of similar election studies that have been carried out on the 2022 NGE by other institutions; for example, by Transparency International PNG Chapter and the ANU 2022 Election Study. This PNG NRI 2022 EOSR therefore should be seen as complementary to the other 2022 election study reports where all should be used collectively to inform discussions on strengthening future elections in PNG.
PART A: Introduction

1. Study of background and structure

1.1 Background

The need to carry out open, transparent, and orderly elections using legitimised guidelines on a timely manner is critical to any democracy, not least in PNG. Since the first elections in 1977 after political independence in 1975, PNG continues to face ongoing challenges with the administration and implementation of its national general elections (NGEs). These challenges have been documented extensively on numerous election studies (e.g. Australian National University, 2018; European Union, 2017; and PNG Transparency International, 2017), and they continue to pose a threat to the credibility and integrity of the elections and by extension, the institutions of state whose membership depends on the elections. Overall, democracy in PNG risks being undermined by the continuation of election-related problems if they are not correctly addressed. Hopefully this report will contribute to the ongoing discussions on reforming the NGE, and the adoption of policy interventions necessary to strengthen the NGEs.

To be sure, PNG is often said to have a vibrant democracy — judged in terms of the successive democratically-elected governments in office since independence in 1975 — with several enabling legislations for carrying out democratically held elections. The Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections (OLNLLGE) and the Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC) are two examples that seek to build a strong foundation for the conduct of democratic and orderly elections contested by strong political parties. Despite this, it can be argued that PNG’s past elections continue to fall short of the expected standards of electioneering as would be expected of any vibrant democracy.

In July 2022, PNG went to the polls to elect the new members of its eleventh Parliament. The pre-election hiccups faced by the PNGEC had showed signs that the 2022 NGE is likely to face similar challenges to those encountered in the previous NGEs. While there were anecdotal signs of the problems, the extent of the challenges encountered in the 2022 NGE was not yet known at that time. So, there was a need to find out about what was going on in the 2022 NGE. In response to this data gap and in order to be consistent with its ongoing work on good governance, political parties and elections, the PNG NRI decided to commission an observational study into the conduct of the 2022 NGE. This Election Observation Study Report is the product of that study. Using an ethnographical approach and focusing on the seven electorates as cases in point, the report provides an account of what has transpired in each of the electorates during the conduct of the 2022 NGE. The report also highlights the shortcomings affecting the orderly and timely conduct of the elections and then proposes some recommendations for strengthening future elections.

As the lead research institute, PNG NRI’s primary role is to carry out independent research and analysis on a wide range of public policy issues and then offer policy prescriptions on how public policy might be developed and carried out in response to different policy challenges. The PNG NRI 2022 National General Election Observation Study, which is the focus of this report, was carried out under the ambit of this role.

An ongoing concern for the PNG NRI pertains to how democracy and good governance can be enhanced in PNG, and in this case, the importance of strong institutions and democratic elections as key enablers for a vibrant democracy and good governance. As part of its ongoing work on strengthening democracy and good governance and in preparing for the 2022 NGE, the PNG NRI Council had approved two projects to be carried out by the Institute in 2022. The first project was the political parties’ seminar series whose aims were to: (a) strengthen political parties’ capacity to formulate their policies in preparation of the 2022 NGE; and (b) to bring all the political parties together to engage with the PNG populace and showcase their party policies in preparation for the 2022 elections. This was successfully carried out and had culminated in the publication and dissemination of the participating political parties’ policies. The second project approved by the PNG NRI Council was the 2022 election research and observation study aimed at looking at what has transpired in the 2022 NGE and make relevant recommendations for election reforms. This report documents the findings of this study. The focus of observation was on seven selected electorates in the Highlands Region.

It is to be mentioned that the PNG NRI is aware of similar election studies that have been carried out on the 2022 NGE by other institutions — for example, by Transparency International PNG Chapter and the ANU 2022 election study. This report therefore should be seen as complementary to the other 2022 election study reports where all should be used collectively to inform discussions on strengthening future elections in PNG.

1.2 Structure of the report

Following the executive summary, the report is organised into three parts. Part A provides the introduction; Part B presents the main part of the report which comprise the observation reports; and Part C discusses the key findings and recommendations, and the conclusion.

Under each part are Sections and Subsections. The electorate observation reports in Sections 4 to 9 are based on reports by the respective observers indicated under those sections. The rest of the sections in the report were written by the editors based on the electorate observation reports and relevant reference material.
2. Context, Objectives and methods

The 2022 Election Observation Study was carried out in the months of July and August 2022, just at the end of the campaign period through to the end of the polling and counting periods. A total of seven electorates in the upper and lower Highlands region were covered in the study. These electorates were:

- Daulo Open (EHP);
- Karimui-Nomane Open (Simbu Province);
- NorthWagheri Open (Jiwaka Province);
- Tambul-Nebilyer Open (WHP);
- Ialibu-Pangia Open (SHP);
- Wapenamanda Open (Enga Province); and
- Eastern Highlands Provincial Seat (EHP).

Altogether, 10 local observers and three officers from the PNG NRI (including the project coordinator) were involved in the study. Except for the Eastern Highlands Provincial Seat Electorate (which had one observer who was a candidate), each of the provinces chosen for the study had a two-person observer team working to observe and report on the campaign, polling and counting phases of the 2022 NGE.

2.1 Context of the study

Elections in PNG such as in other parliamentary democracies, provide an important avenue for the people to elect their leaders. These leaders then go on to run parliament and the executive government. In PNG, the success (or otherwise) of any election depends on, inter-alia, the behaviour of voters, communities where the voters come from, candidates and their supporters, and those who assist to administer elections. One of the interesting phenomena about elections in PNG, which has also gained the interest of various studies (see Australian National University, 2018; European Union, 2017; and PNG Transparency International, 2017), has been the way voters and candidates behave to shape both the implementation and outcomes of elections. Being a research institute, the PNG NRI is equally interested on those matters. More specifically, it is interested to find out about what goes on in elections focusing mainly on election actors, the election-related problems that undermine the holding of proper elections, if any, and how future elections can be improved using a variety of operational and strategic interventions. This study is set against this context and uses real-time field observations to gain insights on what has transpired on the ground in the 2022 NGE. Using the seven electorates as cases in point, the study concentrates on three important periods of the 2022 NGE: the campaign period, the polling period and the counting period.

2.2 Objectives of the study

The study is driven by four related objectives:

- To provide a real-time observational account of how the 2022 NGE was carried out;
- To determine the anomalies, if any, undermining the conduct of the 2022 NGE. Data from this would assist to determine the extent in which the 2022 NGE has met the expectations of a successful election in terms of campaign, polling and counting. The aim is to determine whether the overall conduct of the election has subscribed to the ideals of a democratically held election of being free and fair, devoid of undue influence and conforming to the legitimate guidelines for conducting elections. A key concern underpinning this study has been on whether the NGE has gradually improved from the sort of problems identified in the previous elections;
- To provide a complementary data source for different societal actors, including the PNG NRI, to collectively use and engage in the discussions on strengthening elections in PNG; and
- To use the data to explore possible areas of future research on specific areas pertaining to elections and the enabling systems that support the elections.

2.3 Study method

The study is qualitative and uses the participant-observation method to collect and analyse data. The primary instruments used are the researchers’ (or observers’) own observations and interactions with candidates, voters, and polling officials during the election. Conclusions about the quality and effectiveness of the 2022 NGE were then drawn from the observations and discussions held during the election. A primary goal of the election study is to witness and record firsthand what has transpired on the ground (or the natural environments) of the campaign, polling, and counting phases of the election so that relevant conclusions can be drawn on the quality and effectiveness of the 2022 NGE. The participant-observation method was therefore considered suitable given its particular strength on delivering this goal.
In terms of the electorates, the study used a targeted and convenient sampling technique to select the electorates. The selection of the seven provinces was aimed at gaining more insights into the election issues in the Highlands region given the region’s recurrent volatility in the elections. In addition, the electorates in the provinces were selected based on convenience and the availability of observers willing to carry out each study. For instance, Karimui-Nomane is a very remote electorate, but it was selected because the study had identified two observers in the electorate who were willing to participate in the study.

The original plan was for the research team to spend 40 days in each electorate. However, the study went beyond 40 days because of the delays in polling and counting, which in turn had to delay the Return of Writs (ROW) — which was originally gazetted for 29 July 2022. Field data was recorded on an agreed recording template designed and agreed to by the research team. Three main areas were the subject of data collection. These were the:

- Campaign observation data;
- Polling observation data; and
- Counting observation data.

Data from these areas were then analysed and synthesised into the report on each electorate.

2.4 Framework for preparing the study report

To ensure consistency of the analyses and presentations, each observer team was required to prepare their elections observation report using a standard framework that includes:

- A background of the electorate;
- The political history of the electorate;
- The candidates’ political party endorsement and alliances;
- Observations of the campaign;
- Observations of the polling;
- Observations of the counting and declaration;
- Findings and recommendations, and
- The conclusion.
3.1 Background of Daulo District/Electorate

Daulo District is one of the eight (8) districts in EHP. It is located to the west of Goroka town and shares borders with Goroka and Unggai-Bena electorates; Chuave and Kundiawa-Gembogl electorates in Simbu Province; and Usino-Bundi electorate in Madang Province. It shares common cultural features such as languages, customs, traditional attires and others through migration, intermarriages and trade exchange with those districts and provinces. The languages spoken are dialects and variants of the Gahuku, Siane and Kuman languages. These dialects and its variants are the Tokano dialect predominantly spoken in the Lower Asaro constituency while Dano is spoken in the Upper Asaro constituency and Siane is spoken in the Watabung constituency. The Upper Asaro and Watabung people can also speak the Kuman language from Simbu Province. The Upper Asaro people can also speak the Maluhiye language of the Wesan people on the border with Madang Province. Daulo District is stretched over a land mass of 609.6km² and had a population of 45,783 as stated in the 2011 Census (National Statistical Office [NSO], 2013). The annual population change rate for Daulo District in 2011 was 3.6 percent per annum and based on this rate, it is estimated that the current population of Daulo District is 62,943.

The district is divided into three LLGs, which are Lower Asaro, Upper Asaro and Watabung. The headquarters of Daulo District is centrally located at Asaro Station.

The economy of Daulo District is largely fuelled by the agriculture sector where coffee is still the leading cash crop and continues to provide employment and income generation opportunities for the people. Kaukau and vegetable production in Daulo have grown exponentially due to the local demand and market.

Figure 1: Map of Daulo District

Source: 2011 PNG National Population and Housing Census (NSO, 2013)

3.2 Political history

Daulo District was once under the Goroka District until 1977 when the Goroka electorate was split into three electorates for ease of management given its population and land mass. Daulo and Unggai-Bena were the new electorates created while Goroka retained its status as an electorate. Such also happened in 2022 where certain electorates in PNG were split to create new electorates while the original electorate names remained with the remnant of the former electorate. For example, the Talasea Open electorate in West New Britain Province was split into two, the new Nakanai Open and the remaining area retaining the Talasea Open name.

in 1977 when he decided to contest the newly created seat of Daulo. Gai Duwabane was endorsed by Sir Iambakey Okuk's National Party and went on to serve Daulo for three terms (1977, 1982 and 1987) in the National Parliament. Duwabane was a senior member of the National Party and held important portfolios such as Minister for Agriculture and Livestock and Minister for Police, among others. Duwabane lost to Sowa Gunia in the 1992 NGE. Gunia served until 1997 when he was unseated by Ron Ganarafo.

The entry of Ganarafo, an economics graduate from the University of PNG and having served as Chief Executive Officer of the Coffee Industry Corporation, was received with much enthusiasm. Ganarafo was elected under PANGU Pari but later joined the People's Democratic Movement Party. He was appointed Vice Minister for Finance and Vice Minister for Overseas Development Assistance under the Skate government and later appointed Fisheries Minister in the Morauta government.

Despite Ganarafo's popularity, he was unseated by Ben Melele Kiagi from Watabung in 2002. Kiagi was educated to high school level and was already into the transport business when he entered politics. Because of his limited education, he stayed in the back bench of the government most of the time. However, he is credited for bringing rural electrification into the Watabung area. Kiagi was unseated in 2007 by Patrick N. Kondo, a coffee buyer who did not complete high school. Like Kiagi, his predecessor MP, Kondo remained in the back bench of Parliament but is credited for bringing a lot of services to Daulo during his term, such as building the Upper Asaro Council Chamber, school buildings and purchase of ambulances for the district.

The people's frustration on their elected leaders being quiet in Parliament was reflected with the re-election of Ganarafo in 2012, after being out of Parliament for 10 years. Ganarafo wasted no time in getting Daulo “back on the track”. He negotiated and successfully secured funding from the South Korean government for the new upgraded health centre at Asaro which is currently serving the people of Daulo and Daulo High School at Omboda village which has now achieved secondary level status, catering for Grades 1 to 12 students in the district apart from the Asaroka Lutheran Secondary School.

In 2017, Ganarafo was unseated by Pogio Ghate, from the neighbouring Mando tribe. Ghate, a local businessman, was educated to tertiary level. His term in Parliament was marred with court challenges from the runner-up in the dispute of election returns. Ghate's emphasis was on rural roads upgrading and building the economy of Daulo through the Coffee Rehabilitation Program and the Small to Medium Enterprises concept. Ghate has lost to Ekime Gorosahu, a paralegal from the neighbouring Asaro tribe in the 2022 NGE.

### 3.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

A total of 57 candidates nominated to contest the Daulo Open seat at the Asaro Council Chamber at Asaro Station for the 2022 NGE. Of the 57 candidates, 24 nominated from the Lower Asaro LLG, 20 from the Upper Asaro LLG and 13 from the Watabung LLG. Out of the 49 registered political parties in PNG, 22 parties endorsed candidates in the Daulo race.

Nominations were generally quiet unlike previous elections where there was singsings and celebrations by supporters in the nomination of their candidate. In the 2022 NGE, almost all the villages in the respective LLGs in Daulo electorate fielded candidates. At the Asaro Council Chamber where intending candidates went to file their nominations, some went quietly while others allowed for extra cultural celebrations and speeches. Candidates spoke on the reasons for contesting, including their policies and those of their political parties, and their visions for the electorate.

The candidates came from various backgrounds including their varying educational levels. There were councillors, coffee buyers, businessmen, church workers, public servants and former members of Parliament. Some were known for their public standing at the local, provincial and national levels, while others were obscure. Some notable candidates include Ekime Gorosahu and Henry Bagme who have consistently contested every election since 1992 and 1997 respectively. Former members of Parliament who were nominated include Sowa Gunia, Ron Ganarafo, Ben Kiagi, Patrick Kondo, and Jim Nomane, former member for Chuave Open. Nomane's nomination was questioned but he was said to have ancestral linkages to the Komongu tribe in Watabung and therefore made Komongu his support base. One other prominent person was Dr Nime Kapo of Nonombaro village in the Watabung area who graduated in the field of veterinary science at the Australian National University. He served in the public service as the chief veterinary doctor of PNG and is a well-known rugby league player having represented the junior Kangaroos, Goroka Lahans and PNG Kumuls.

### 3.4 Observations of campaign

**Pre-campaign activities**

It was observed generally that preparations for elections which includes lobbying by leading village leaders for certain intending candidates, announcements by intending candidates and endorsements of candidates were a communal activity. These were normally done prior to the actual election dates. It may range from two to three years prior to the actual issue of writs for the election. During this period, it was also observed that feasts are hosted, where concerned tribal leaders come to air their views on village and tribal leadership and for the villagers to reach a consensus to select their leaders to contest in the coming election. Exchanges of food and money were common in the campaigns. It is also evident for intending candidates to host sporting activities on festive periods such as Christmas where neighbouring villages were invited to participate. This is
all geared to popularising themselves and making their intentions to contest known early. Any intending candidate that does not make his announcements early to his family, clan and tribe will be told by the voters that he is late and that they have committed their support to another candidate.

**Campaign strategies**

Campaign time is an opportunity for candidates to present their policies and that of their political parties if endorsed by a political party. Candidates also outline their reasons for contesting and their vision for the electorate, if they win. It starts right after nomination and ends a week before polling. The campaign period for the 2022 NGE was six weeks. The following are some common strategies used by candidates in Daulo to campaign.

- **Singing and chanting:** Campaign in Daulo commenced with the sounds of chanting and fanfare including cultural undertakings such as singsings when the candidates went to nominate at the Council Chamber at Asaro Station.
- **Feasting:** Food and drinks were seen to be distributed at all the campaign gatherings.
- **Posters, billboards, banners and stickers:** Posters, banners, billboards and stickers were posted everywhere. Some candidates even displayed mobile numbers on the vehicles and posters for people to ring them.
- **Use of campaign merchandise:** Merchandise such as T-shirts and caps were used to promote the candidates and their parties.
- **Social media:** Social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were actively used.
- **Collaboration of candidates:** It was observed that candidates were collaborating with other candidates from other villages, tribes and areas to maximise their chances under the LPV system.
- **Alliances:** Professional and political party alliances and networks were also common.
- **Political rallies:** It was also observed that after the conclusion of political rallies, the host candidates would distribute cooked food which included pork, other protein (lamb flaps and chicken) to other candidates and their supporters in appreciation of their acceptance of invitation and participation. Fresh garden produce foods such as bananas, taro, sweet potato and sugarcane were also given.
- **Invitations:** Candidates were invited to villages. Invited candidates would give money to the coordinators of the host candidates (campaign houses) for the upkeep of their campaign houses. Cash ranging from K500–K2,000 were given. This was an opportunity for visiting candidates to lobby for the second and third preferences from the area. In the event that more than one or two candidates have visited and made contribution, the coordinators would assure them that they would not be forgotten and will at least get some votes and that their visit is not wasted.
- **Policies and motives for contesting:** Most candidates interviewed responded that their main reason for contesting is because they have seen Daulo regressed in the last 20 years and that there was no effective voice for the people in Parliament. Few candidates were campaigning for the specific social welfare policies such as the health platform where they wanted to see a healthy population in Daulo which they believed would contribute meaningfully to its economic development. Another emphasised on education and human resources development. He wants to see more people in Daulo being educated to tertiary level. He said only educated people will come back and contribute meaningfully to the development agenda at the district and national levels.

### 3.5 Observations of polling

Polling was observed in different locations in the electorate. Below is an account of how polling was conducted:

**Lower Asaro LLG**

Polling commenced late and was generally slow in most areas in the Daulo electorate. Most polling teams arrived at their sites around 12:00 noon. Each polling booth was manned by a PO and APO. Two local police reservists were to man the polling booths. The main observations on polling are as follows:

- **At Asaro Primary School,** three polling stations were set up for the Asaro villages: Gimisave 1, Gimisave 2 and Gimisave 3. The polling officials set up two polling booths for men and women to cast their ballots in secret.
- **Two separate lines** were set up for the male and female voters. The PO signed for the male voters while the APO signed for the female voters.
- **The buildup of the crowd** since the morning and the presence of drunkards in the crowd added to the tension and anxiety to the occasion. There were sporadic instances of rowdiness and confrontations between supporters of rival candidates.
- **Before the casting of votes commenced,** there was heated argument between the polling officials and the villagers. The villagers refused to stand in line to cast their votes and told the polling officials that the entire village has agreed on block voting for their candidate as it was their primary base. This practice is known in Tok Pisin as *Tamim* Table.
- **Their stand was backed by the defective Common Roll update** which was not a true representation of the eligible voters in the village. The supporters of rival candidates agreed to share the ballot papers among the candidates where
there was more than one candidate contesting from the area. Due to the time factor and for convenience sake, the polling officials and the security personnel gave in to the demands of the villagers and allowed for block voting.

- In all of the three polling stations, the POs and APOs signed all the ballot papers and handed to the villagers to mark the ballots for the candidates of their choice.
- A selected number of people would mark the ballots while the villagers looked on. This was a similar situation when we went down the highway to all the polling stations we observed. There was no secret ballot and separate polling booths for men and women.
- Polling was completed around 6:00 pm but other areas continued into the night. After the polling, the ballot boxes from Daulo electorate were transported by the PNGEC officials and Joint Security Forces personnel to the counting venue at the National Sports Institute (NSI) in Goroka and locked up in 40-foot containers for safekeeping and counting, later.
- Candidates and their supporters also escorted the ballot boxes to NSI to ensure there was no foul play such as transporting illegal ballot boxes into the venue. The supporters proceeded to build temporary canvas shelters outside NSI to watch over the movement of PNGEC officials.

Upper Asaro LLG

In the Upper Asaro LLG, the following observations were made:

- The polling teams arrived late. The people reached an understanding with the polling teams that it would be time consuming going through the Common Roll given its defective status and as their respective area and villages have fielded candidates, it was only appropriate that the polling officials handed the ballot papers to mark as their preferred candidates.
- A consensus was reached between the polling officials, security personnel and supporters of rival candidates, and a communal decision was made for block voting for convenience sake and also to settle tensions (cooperative voting).
- There was no major incident recorded except for sporadic instances of commotions and short fights at the polling sites.

Watabung LLG

In the Watabung LLG, the following observations were made:

- Polling in Watabung started late and finished late. Disagreements over voting arrangements at polling stations developed into commotion and destruction of polling booths at several polling places.
- People were injured in the commotion and a house was burnt. The polling officials fled for their safety leaving behind the ballot boxes for the people to mark in their absence.
- At another polling place, a person was chopped to death in the ensuing commotion between rival supporters of candidates and houses and private properties were burned and destroyed.
- Police reinforcements from Goroka arrived late but managed to save the ballot boxes and the polling officials. The ballot boxes from that polling place were questioned because they had been tampered with and had to be locked up at the Goroka Police Station for further deliberation and clearance. The situation led to the arrest by the Police and the Joint Security forces, of 86 people who were charged for tampering with the ballot papers and state property.

3.6 Observations of counting and declaration

Counting for the electorates in EHP did not commence immediately because of the delay in setting up the counting centres, which were make-shift shelters made of tarpaulin on timber and bamboo frames. The walls were barricaded to divide the shelter into three rooms where the different LLG areas ballots would be counted. The following observations were made for counting for the Daulo Open electorate:

- Counting for the primary votes for Daulo was separated into the three LLGs where they were controlled by three appointed AROs.
- Counting for Lower and Upper Asaro areas commenced on 11 August 2022.
- There was delay in counting the ballot boxes from Watabung LLG due to disputes over the status of the tampered boxes. The scrutineers of Watabung candidates demanded that counting will not proceed until the two disputed boxes were admitted for counting.
- On 13 August 2022, PNGEC officials and all parties resolved the matter by a blunder saying: “putting aside the legalities which will be time consuming, as Melanesians we have a culture of talking things over amongst ourselves and to reach consensus on the way forward”. This allowed the Watabung scrutineers to stand firm on their demand for the tampered boxes to be admitted for counting.
- The RO stood firm on his decision that the two boxes are in Police custody as a court exhibit and that it was beyond his jurisdiction to do anything as he will be held liable under the electoral laws. However, candidates and their agents
still have the legal options to follow in order to get the tampered box reinstated for counting.

• The delay continued but on 15 August 2022, the Watabung scrutineers agreed to accept the decision of the RO and allowed the counting to proceed.

• Counting was done by about 40 officials who sorted, counted and rechecked the ballot papers but it was cumbersome and time consuming.

• Officials showed signs of fatigue and errors were unavoidable causing the scrutineers to demand for rechecking until the errors were fixed, or explanations given for anomalies. The counting officials were asked by their superiors (RO and AROs) to go through the whole counting process again to rectify the problems.

Primary count
The pattern of voting, as observed during polling and confirmed after the completion of the primary count, is block voting. Appendix 1 shows that after the primary count in all the three LLGs in Daulo, candidates only collected most votes from their villages and areas; that is, in their own LLG. The votes received represented six percent or less of the total votes cast.

• The Lower Asaro candidates scored well in their LLG but did not get many votes from the other two LLGs.

• The Upper Asaro candidates also scored well in their LLG but did not get many votes from the Lower Asaro and Watabung LLGs. The same is said for the Watabung candidates.

• The only candidate who surprisingly collected a sizeable number of votes from the other two LLGs is Stanley Gotaha. He collected 840 first preference votes from Lower Asaro and 772 first preference votes from Upper Asaro. Gotaha is originally from Asaroyufa village in the Goroka electorate and has contested in the previous elections for the EHP regional and Goroka electorate seats.

Second preference votes by exclusion/elimination process
After the completion of the primary votes count, the candidates are ranked from the highest to the lowest scores. The exclusion/elimination process commences where the second preference votes of the candidates with the lowest scores are distributed to the candidates who are still in the race. This continues through to the last three candidates who survived the exclusion. The third or the second runner-up is usually the decider for the winner.

• Block Voting (BV): The trend of block voting was also seen in the elimination process where when a candidate from a certain village or tribe was eliminated, his second preference votes were distributed mainly to a candidate from his area. In Lower Asaro, Ekime Gorosahu was the most experienced and popular candidate, having consecutively contested elections since 1992. The 2022 NGE was his seventh attempt and he collected most of the second preference votes from the other eight Asaro candidates at their elimination, compared to other candidates (Vote by Popularity).

It was also seen during and at the conclusion of the counting of the primary votes that most candidates tend to do well when it came to the ballot boxes from their villages and tribe. They only collected a few to nothing from other villages, tribes and LLGs. This generally reflected the style of voting observed during the polling. Block voting was the generalised pattern of voting in the election.

• Swapping of preferences (SOP): During polling, it was observed that where there were two candidates contesting from the same area, the villagers agreed to share the initial primary votes and swap the second preference votes (Swapping Preference in Block Voting).

• Voting as repayments of goods (food and money): It was also observed that individuals and villages were voting to repay their debts. This was evident in their casting and marking of the second and third preferences. Those who had received financial assistance and or in-kind assistance from candidates as individuals or groups, would report this to the village so that it can decide on the number of ballots to allocate for repaying the debts. It was noted that candidates had visited the people or families in a particular village during their time of need such as deaths, troubles, or had assisted in removing hauskrais, compensation, court fines, school fees or bride price and so on.

• Consolation or sorry votes: In this year’s election, people in Daulo casted what may be termed as sorry votes. In the Lunube tribe of the Lower Asaro LLG, former two term MP for Daulo, Ron Ganarafo, nominated from his sick bed. He was not seen campaigning and just a week before the polling, he passed away. His supporters showed their loyalty and support by casting all their votes for him. Ekime Gorosahu received sorry votes from almost the whole electorate as he had been contesting the Daulo seat consecutively since 1992. This election was the seventh and the last for him.

Declaration of the winner for Daulo Open
After all the exhaustive process of counting, quality checks and elimination, the top five candidates that remained in the race included Ekime Gorosahu, Gibson Sikondowe, Homate Gimiseve, Henry Bagme and Dr Nime Kapo. After
the final exclusion, candidate Ekime Gorosahu surpassed the absolute majority of 11,767 votes with 12,750 votes. Gorosahu was officially declared at 4:00 pm on 4 August 2022 as the member-elect for the Daulo Open electorate to the eleventh Parliament of PNG. Appendix 2 shows the top five candidates for the Electorate.

The declaration was made by the RO in the presence of the Election Manager, Provincial Police Commander and Deputy Provincial Administrator, Joint Security Forces personnel, PNGEC staff and scrutineers.

3.7 Key findings and recommendations

Findings
The Daulo Open electorate had a quiet campaign without much trouble. Candidates nominated quietly and gave speeches at the public gatherings. The campaign period was seen as the feasting period. A lot of cooked and raw food were given to visiting candidates and in return were given money as payment for food and also for votes.

Candidates collaborated with each other in exchange for their second and third preferences of votes. Professional and political parties’ allegiance were also noticed. Political rallies, posters, caps, T-shirts and billboards were used as mediums to convey their policies and messages to the voters.

Polling in Daulo was marred by negotiations for mob voting, block voting and ballot boxes were tampered at one location restricting many voters from exercising their rights to vote freely, fairly and safely. The tribes or the community made the decisions on how and whom the people should vote for. If a village had one of its own contesting, that village had to block vote for him or her. There was no secret ballot. The ballots were openly marked by a few handpicked people at the polling sites.

The problems that arose from polling were due to the Common Roll not updated properly, among others. There were not enough security personnel at the polling sites. The Police reservists were only placed there to guard the boxes and could not do more than that.

The PNGEC failed to produce an updated Common Roll to deliver a free and fair election in Daulo. The Common Roll was not used, there was no secret ballot, no separate polling booths for men and women, and not enough security personnel at the polling sites.

The appointment of election officials in Daulo was very late. The RO, ARO, POs and APOs were appointed very late. The RO and ARO for Daulo electorate were appointed one month prior to the nomination and therefore did not have enough time to prepare well for the rigors of the election. Everything was rushed and they were under enormous pressure.

Security was poor during the polling. Police manpower was inadequate to ensure that people casted their votes free from coercion or inducement. The lack of police presence also meant the lack of guarantee of the voter’s safety. They unwillingly accepted the communal decision of the village, which is more akin to mob rule.

In the eyes of the observers, nomination and voting in Daulo was seen as institutionalising a system of ‘community totalitarianism’ where the individual has no power, and the community decides for who to nominate and who to vote. This is the new trend in Daulo for the 2022 NGE. This contradicts section 50 of the PNG Constitution which provides for power of choice and freedom of expression for every person. It is also against the principles of democracy which gives a person the right to vote in an election, free from coercion or inducement in a secret ballot. The Constitution further allows for the right of any person to run for public office in an election, subject to the eligibility rule.

The villagers took over the polling sites and decided on how the people should vote and also on how many votes should be casted for the candidates. They also decided prior to the elections who should contest in the election and who should not. The PNGEC staff and the Police personnel present at the polling site to ensure that the secret ballot is conducted could not handle it. Instead they succumbed to the pressures of the villagers and allowed a few of the handpicked ones to make the decision for the entire village. Therefore, this action gave legality to totalitarianism to take root in the Daulo electorate where a few can make decisions for everyone.

Trading of votes in this election was widely seen that people including villages used the occasion to repay their debts. The debts were mainly assistance they had received from candidates prior to the elections. The assistance people received from the candidates ranged from financial assistance for school fees, deaths, hauskrails, compensation, bride price payments, business advances and so on.

Recommendations
The 2022 NGE for Daulo was in disarray especially in this era of global digital transformation. The democratic rights of individuals were taken away by community totalitarianism which shifted individual rights to community power and decisions. No longer is there a secret ballot and elections are not free and fair anymore. The massive destruction of public and private properties including injuries and deaths from election-related violence is unprecedented. This calls for immediate reforms. The following is therefore suggested:

- **Audit of the PNGEC and the 2022 National General Election:** An independent audit of the PNGEC and the conduct of the 2022 NGE must be commissioned immediately and funded by the government of PNG to troubleshoot the
current problems associated with the electoral process with recommendations to rectify these problems. The audit should also be advertised internationally in order to attract competent reputable firms to carry out the work. The results of the independent audit can serve as the basis for electoral reforms to the current electoral process in PNG.

- National Identification System: Given all the problems associated with the current election and past elections, starting from the electoral roll updates to polling, it is recommended that a more user-friendly identification system be used so that it can help in addressing the issues associated with the Common Roll update and also to avoid instances of multiple voting and block voting. It is suggested that a simple identification card system is developed for eligible voters similar to that currently used by the banks (Bank of South Pacific, Kina Bank and others) and mobile phone operators like Digicel. They take photos of their clients and upload onto their computer systems. Many Papua New Guineans are now comfortably accessing bank and mobile phone services using this simple identification system.

3.8 Conclusion

Several issues identified in the observation report in Daulo were in relation to the administration of polling. One key issue was the introduction of community totalitarianism where the community took charge and decided on who people should vote for. This was common in the electorate. The reasons for the community deciding on the polling process were attributed to the outdated and defective Common Roll, where voters’ names were missing and in some instances, there were less or more names than the actual voting population.

Another reason was that the polling team arrived late at the polling site and therefore there was not enough time to organise polling. Further, the community had already chosen the candidates to vote for and therefore there was no need for individuals to vote. The freedom of individual for “one person, one vote” was undermined by the community. The integrity of democracy and the sacred power of ballot papers was undermined by the community. The election laws on the use of the Common Roll and the indelible ink was not practised in many polling booths. Effectively, the election in Daulo was rigged by the community leaders and a few thugs. This must not be allowed to happen in the future.
4. Eastern Highlands Provincial observation report
Observer: Wilson Thompson

4.1 Background of the Eastern Highlands Province

The Eastern Highlands Province (EHP) was the first province discovered in the Highlands region in the 1930's, opening up external travel including government patrols. It was recorded that Lutheran missionaries had accessed it from Ramu Valley via Rihona and Gadsup villages. However, the first government station was established at Kainantu and was named the Upper Ramu Post and then to Bena and Goroka until WWII ensued with the construction of the airport and the expansion of the administrative headquarters.

After WWII, the Kainantu and Goroka patrol post was re-established as missionary stations at Raipinka, Kabiufa and Asaroka while the ANGAU founded the Aiyura Agriculture Experimental Station where quinine tree seeds brought from Malaysia was trialled. This was followed by the introduction of coffee in the 1950’s followed by livestock projects. These economic activities resulted in alienation of customary land for various leases.

Figure 2: Map of Eastern Highlands Province

Source: 2011 PNG National Population and Housing Census (NSO, 2013)

4.2 Political history of Eastern Highlands Province

In the 1964 elections, Eastern Highlands District (now Province) comprised Kainantu (comprising Obura-Wonenara), Okapa, Henganofi (comprising Lufa) and Goroka (comprising Unggai-Bena and Daulo) Open electorates. In the 1968 elections, all electorates remained with the creation of an additional electorate Daulo, followed by Lufa in 1972 and Unggai-Bena and Obura-Wonenara in 1977. EHP ranks second in PNG after Morobe Province in terms of population and the number of electorates.

The Obura-Wonenara electorate comprises Gadsup and Tairora linguistic and cultural group (Gadsup-Tairora LLG) and the Anga group (Lamari and Yelia LLG). The Kainantu electorate comprises Agarabi (Agarabi LLG) and Kafe speakers that are in Kamano 1 and Kamano 2 LLG. Henganofi also has all Kafe speakers except those in Lufa and Okapa who speak Keigana language of neighbouring Okapa District. The Okapa electorate has six language groups: North Fore, South Fore, Keigana, Kanite, Gimi and Auyuana.
The Lufa electorate has Yagaria and Unavi language group followed by Unggai-Bena that has Bena and Siane language group. The Daulo Open electorate has Dano (Upper and Lower Asaro LLGs) and Siane language group (Watabung LLG).

Goroka District has Gahuku and Tokano language groups and the three LLGS, Gahuku LLG, Mimanalo LLG and Goroka Urban LLG. The district headquarter is at North Goroka which is in the Goroka Urban LLG.

4.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

The number of candidates varied with the highest (64) for the EHP Regional, followed by Daulo Open (58) and the lowest in Goroka Open (18). Candidates’ educational qualifications varied from postgraduate degree to elementary or less than six years of primary education. Work experience included former heads of government departments and agencies to professionals (surveyors, medical doctors, accountants, lawyers, etc.), and self-employed businessmen. EHP had three female candidates in Kainantu and one each in Henganofi, Obura-Wonenara and EHP Regional.

In regard to political party endorsement, the visibility of parties was difficult with the very high number of candidates, mostly above 30 persons in all electorates except Goroka Open. Less than 15 candidates were endorsed by political parties. For example, out of the 18 candidates in Goroka Open, eight candidates were endorsed by political parties.

Political party alliance at the national level did not permeate at the provincial and district levels. For example, the Pangu-United Labour Party (ULP) coalition with the United Resources Party, National Alliance Party and Social Democratic Party, or the Opposition (PNC Party, PNG Party, Melanesian Liberal Party, etc.) or the alliance of small parties (Country Party, Our Development Party, Social Democratic Party, United Party), did not impact on candidates in the electorates.

Most candidates formed alliance and network around tribal and cultural links. For example, candidates in Goroka worked along Tokano language group or Mimanalo LLG against Gahuku speakers.

4.4 Observations of campaign

Pre-campaign activities

Election campaigns are promotional activities of candidates or the political parties that include: convoy of vehicles carrying supporters with posters and placards or people chanting the name of the candidate or political party; public feasts or rally inviting supporters and allied candidates to speak; inviting people to campaign houses to speak to small groups; and visiting people in their villages. Also, party leaders visited and spoke on the party’s policies and their candidates.

Leading up to the Issue of Writs on 12 May 2022, late Hon Sam Basil, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Transport had promoted the ULP throughout Morobe, Madang, Eastern Highlands, Simbu and Jiwaka provinces and defined that area as the Eastern Block. A public rally was held at Eriku Oval in Lae, Morobe Province which was attended by ULP and Country Party starting the public campaign for Prime Minister James Marape from the Eastern Block. This was followed by a rally hosted by the Country Party in Goroka on 11 May 2022. Sad to say, Hon Sam Basil died in a vehicle accident in his electorate and the Issue of Writs was delayed by a week.

The death of Basil and the delayed Writs impacted on political parties but in EHP, most noise and speeches were made by candidates when they went to nominate at the respective district office in a convoy of vehicles and with people from different areas.

After the Country Party rally, its leader, Hon Wera Mori, called off the Kainantu and Kundiawa Eastern Block rally due to the demise of the ULP leader and also the attack on Saki Soloma, Minister for Energy and Pangu candidate, the burning of five vehicles in Okapa and also the burning in Kainantu of the vehicle of People Progress Party (PPP) candidate and Minister for Mining.

Campaign strategies

Unlike other electorates, Goroka as the centre of the Highlands region, attracted many big-name party leaders to attend and speak at the rallies organised by their candidates or generally as a public dissemination of their policies on the grandstand at the Peace Park Market field in Goroka. A list of parties and their leaders who attended and spoke at rallies in EHP include:

- PNG Country Party and its leader Hon. Wera Mori hosted an Eastern Block rally which was attended by the ULP leader, late Sam Basil.
- PNG Party leader, Hon. Belden Namah attended campaign rallies for his candidates in Goroka and also in Lufa and Kainantu.
- PNC Party leader, Hon. Peter O’Neill attended campaign rallies in Goroka and also at Unggai-Bena, Obura-Wonenara and Lufa.
- PANGU Pati leader and Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape attended public rallies at Henganofi and Mando village in Daulo.
- In Goroka, there was a public rally at Iufi Iufa for the three Mimanalo LLG candidates and various candidates hosting alliance gatherings in selected villages.
• An interesting observation is the widespread use of the media including social media (Facebook and WhatsApp) by candidates and political parties in each electorate. Many candidates used mobile phones to contact supporters instead of travelling to respective villages or used WhatsApp and Facebook or mobile SMS to reach out to people.

• The campaign activities were basically to consolidate the primary votes and the alliances and invitation to candidates were to share the preference votes which was not along party lines but mostly cultural and geographically based.

4.5 Observations of polling

The PNGEC officials in EHP organised a meeting for all candidates, ROs and AROs and the Provincial Police Commander and enforcement officers, where it outlined its preparations so far, expectations during the campaign period, electoral offences and need for free and fair elections.

Many candidates raised issues on the impartiality of the security personnel and election officials; delays in the Issue of Writs; PNGEC not displaying the Common Roll for objections (as required by the Organic Law on National and LLG Elections); absence of the final 2022 Common Roll; failure in gazetted of ROs and AROs; and also polling stations. Further, serious questions were raised on changing of the polling dates in Simbu Province and EHP that was only causing confusion and creating anxiety and loss of respect on the electoral administration. The delay was also increasing expenses for candidates and political parties.

Despite the concerns raised and supposed positive response, polling for EHP that was scheduled for 4 July 2022 was postponed to 12 July 2022. Other provinces such as Simbu, Jiwaka and WHP had their polling dates deferred from 12 July to 16 to 18 July when the Issue of Writs was due on the 29 July 2022.

There were concerns calling on the PNGEC to stick to the law as well as practices as its actions during the 2022 NGE is below standards. The delay in election and polling dates including shifting dates continuously, confused the people and also created chaos for election planning and operations. Concerns were raised that the PNGEC had not learnt lessons from the 2020 Goroka Open by-election when over 300 police personnel were overrun by voters, due to the deferral of the polling despite the presence of polling security and cameras.

On the polling day, the following were observed:

• Polling teams were not dispatched before the opening of polling stations at 8am.
• Most polling teams had no police personnel as was in the past.
• In isolated cases, the allocated or serialised ballot papers for a specified polling location was not delivered to that location.
• The Common Roll issued to each polling team did not contain names of eligible voters at that polling station but the Common Roll for the whole ward with names listed in alphabetical order, rendering the Common Roll as useless.
• In most polling stations in Goroka Open, the community argued about the manner of voting and distribution of ballot papers where selected persons marked all three preferences.
• Polling officials did not mark names off the Common Roll, nor used the inedible ink and only initialled the ballot papers and ensured safely put into the ballot boxes, locked with serial tags and taken for counting.
• At Kenangi, Watabung LLG, Daulo, the PO was chased away while the ballot papers were stashed in the ballot box only to realise that it must be initialised. The supposed voters asked the PO to return with the box the next day to formalise the ballots only to have the box smashed. Eighty-six persons were arrested and detained at the Goroka Police Station for tampering with the ballot box.
• At Christopher Field, Kofika in Mimanalo LLG and Fimito and Matheson Bridge, Lapeigu in Gahuku LLG, Goroka Open, polling ended at 10:30 pm. By law, polling was scheduled from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm; hence, this polling that was conducted at night and outside scheduled and gazette time is a breach of law.
• At Wande market, Wesan in Mimanalo LLG, the PO started the polling process by making a speech which was effectively a public statement of campaign. The PO specifically called on the assembled people to vote for the Governor and also the Member for Goroka, citing that they had provided services.
• At Kabiufa High School, Mimanalo LLG, the PO and APO issued inducements and threats by issuing three to four ballot papers to individuals when a voter is only entitled to a single ballot and they further demanded in public to be given 100 ballot papers to cast their votes for candidates of choice and refused to sign ballot papers.
• There was an interesting observation at Mt Kiss and DCA polling station in Goroka Urban LLG, where there was no polling and the ballot papers were marked elsewhere and deposited into the ballot box.
• Furthermore, the students and staff and dependants of the University of Goroka were denied their rights to vote as certain persons took control of the polling station and marked ballots for their candidates.
• At the Triton polling station, 100 metres away in full view of the Goroka Police Station, only 146 persons voted and it was disturbed by drunkards and supporters of a candidate. The RO decided that polling should continue the
next day, 13 July 2022 where 1,300 ballot papers were divided between two candidates and a few persons marked all ballot papers.

- An unfortunate incident happened in the Goroka Urban LLG, where, despite the presence of three Police Barracks and the Police Mobile Squad, the urban residents including police personnel and their families did not cast their ballots as candidates and supporters from surrounding villages took control of the ballot papers and selected persons who marked all papers.

- The polling officials had to comply with the community request, some by threats on pre-selected persons marking all ballot papers and legitimised by signing and depositing block votes and securing it for counting or scrutiny. The security arrangements were poor because these illegal activities transpired unabated.

One general observation that is applicable in most polling stations in EHP is that the most disadvantaged persons such as females, disabled, elderly and the poor were not given any opportunity to decide how they should cast their ballots in secret for candidates of choice but had to accept the decision made by certain groups (mob voting) and those who have received much support including cash from candidates. Almost all ballots were done by a selected few for block voting or one or two candidates only. The evidence is where polling statistics indicate most or many candidates scoring some votes at polling stations. In 2022, many polling stations had only one candidate scoring all votes or only few scoring or dividing all ballots delivered to that location.

4.6 Observations of counting and declaration

Despite the EHP completing the polling on 13 July 2022, all ballot boxes were extracted from all electorates to be counted in a single venue in Goroka. Although all the ballot papers and boxes for Goroka, Daulo and Unggai-Bena had been taken into Goroka on 13 July 2022, there was delay in counting, while waiting for other ballot boxes to be extracted to Goroka from Obura-Wonenara, Lufa and Okapa.

Many boxes brought in from Obura-Wonenara were said to be without serial tags. It is ironical to worry about serial tags when the ballots were illegally cast and serial tags does not matter but it is a process to legitimise the illegal ballots lodged. The scrutiny of ballots was delayed by over a week, where counting commenced on 21 July 2022, seven days away from the date for Return of Writs.

It was stated that counting will not commence until security personnel that had gone for polling in Simbu, Jiwaka and WHP return to EHP. The security personnel could not protect the people against threats and intimidation and violence and even safeguard and secure the ballot papers and stationery and ballot boxes. In any case, what would it matter for their presence in counting mostly illegal ballots. Another issue is the action taken by PNGEC to legitimise the illegal actions during conduct of polling.

Declaration

The imminent drawing near of 29 July and most scrutineers’ objections and disputes in the scrutiny were rejected, it would be surprising how the PNGEC polling officials produced their Journals for the specific day and the activities that occurred. The main observations for declaration-related activities were:

- All the eight open electorates had the counting completed by 29 July 2022 and the Writs returned to the Governor General except for the regional electorate that was declared on 8 August 2022.

- The ROs and the PNGEC were forced by time limitations not to entertain scrutineers’ objections and disputes on the scrutiny of ballots. Issues raised were serialised ballot papers allocated for specific polling stations ending up at different polling stations.

- Other issues raised were late dispatch of polling teams and polling or block voting or illegal voting carried outside of prescribed polling times of 8:00 am to 6:00 pm and polling officials getting more than enough ballot papers and voting for candidates of their choice by allowing block voting.

- Objections raised in communities where there was no block voting (community endorsed including splitting of ballot papers among different candidates) but in places where ballot papers and boxes such as all urban polling stations that were hijacked by candidates and non-voting or eligible supporters without allowing eligible voters to be heard or deciding how or who to vote.

- Polling stations in front of police station, barracks and police residence in all electorates were not spared of what happened and this perhaps is very scary and bad for elections in PNG. Double infringements issues such as ballots marked elsewhere outside of polling station and by few persons and not eligible voters were admitted for scrutiny.

- The observation matters are raised to ensure the integrity of the polling and elections must be maintained and independence of the PNGEC must be paramount. PNGEC officers must not take ballot papers nor make public statements to induce or threaten voters and police stations or barracks are supposed to be places of safety and security of those threatened.
4.7 Findings and recommendations

There was high turnout of candidates in the elections in EHP and with many who had better education and work qualifications including six females. Political parties need to do more awareness on the importance of voting on party lines and policies and not voting candidates from own villages, language group or geographical links. The OLIPPAC needs to be amended to include party endorsement of candidates at LLG and other governments so that importance of parties is strengthened and to reduce voting on groupings. Analysis of the observations and recommendations is as follows:

Political party endorsement at all levels of government

Political party activities and alliance was minimal at provincial and district level and gained momentum when the numbers were tallied for the invitation by the Governor General to the party that had highest number of MPs elected.

Candidates forming alliance and network around tribal and cultural links must be discouraged and instead, the emphasis be put on political parties and platforms and policies of candidates. There is likely some collaboration by interest groups in pushing for illegal practices where candidates and voters work on block voting at village, bit more at ward or wider groupings that is bad for democracy and national unity.

The campaigns styles and mechanisms have changed from public gatherings and visits to more focus group meetings, including use of phone and social media while political parties also used radio, TV and newspapers and leaflets. However, there is a danger where lies or distortion of facts could be accepted by those using the public and private media especially social media that cannot be verified. It could lead to possible conflicts in ensuing elections.

Most focus on political parties was on the tussle between PANGU Pati and PNC Party and due to high number of candidates, the impact and presence of political parties was weak. Alliance and networking of candidates and sharing of preference votes was not on political party coalition and alliance but based on language and culture and geographical basis.

Use of state assets including DSIP/PSIP

There were complaints on the continued use of state assets such as vehicles and office by sitting MPs and Ministers including launching or signing of projects, disbursement of cheques from DSIP and PSIP after the Issue of Writs. No MP should be handling cheque or cash and even announcing district projects three months before the Issue of Writs.

There was widespread use of PSIP and DSIP funds given out or promised to supporters under the guise of district projects and MSME funding. These funds including state assets such as vehicles, office equipment and payment of government funds by MPs should cease six months before the Issue of Writs. DSIP and opening of projects and commitments did influence the pattern of support and illegal voting.

Alliance and networking on policies and programs and party

More public rallies for political parties should be encouraged in higher learning institutions and in public so that candidates can be able to promote their policies and their own profiles too.

There was widespread intimidation and threats in securing as many primary votes as possible. Organising alliances and networking in village or cultural and language groupings to share preference outside of parties and policies but on cultural and geographical basis must be discouraged.

Inducements and threats from other provinces

There were certain issues happening in other electorates that impacted on the conduct of elections in EHP. For example, polling in Hela on 4 July and the declaration of MPs even before voting in EHP had negative impact on voters. Also, when illegal marking of ballot papers in Hela and SHP appeared on various media, people of EHP decided to do the same in block voting and marking of ballot papers outside of the designated polling stations.

Further, the security personnel were told not to do anything as they were the same personnel moved from Hela and SHP. If they could not stop violence, threats and intimidation and illegal voting in other provinces, they must not impose upon Eastern Highlanders.

The security personnel should be deployed and made useful instead of displaying uniforms and vehicles that could not deter illegal practices especially illegal voting and sharing of preferences with threats and inducements.

The moving of security personnel from worst affected election areas into less affected places like EHP has painted a bad impression. Polling in the Highlands region should ideally start from the province with the highest number of seats, EHP (9 seats) and then move to Simbu (7 seats), Jiwaka (4 seats) and WHP (5 seats), then Enga, SHP and Hela.

As the security personnel move out of EHP, extraction and counting can commence, and declarations can be made after the last polling in Hela.

Dates and schedules important for integrity of elections

Constant shifting of dates as happened during the 2022 NGE must be discouraged as such changes confuse the people and can create chaos for election planning and operations. The absence of security personnel or their lack of action is deplorable
and must be brought out publicly. Polling teams must be dispatched on time and schedule and voting done in prescribed
time and venue and strictly conduct polling on time and in scheduled polling station.

**Use of permanent public servants for election purposes**

All ROs, AROs and POs must be permanent public servants. *Under the Public Service (Management) Act*, public servants are
responsible for the conduct of elections and any allegations of impropriety including criminal prosecution and sentencing
can result in disciplinary action by the employer.

The PNGEC has moved away and recruited casual staff who have no career to protect nor entitlements to save in the event
of disciplinary action. Also, these casual polling officials have no standing in the community. In the past, teachers, district
officers and kiaps were involved and if there is no respect, where do the voters go to see in terms of education or health
services or land survey or agriculture extension work.

All polling officials who must be permanent public servants are expected to deliver the Journal. This must be certified
that elections were conducted in secret ballot, names of voters marked off the Common Roll and indelible ink used and
ballots deposited in the ballot box within the prescribed polling station and not votes marked elsewhere and brought in. A
declaration must be signed that if there is an evidence that is contrary, the persons should be terminated forthwith from the
public service and if criminal allegations are sustained, all accumulated final entitlements are forfeited to the state. Such a
possible penalty will ensure that the public servants engaged as election officials adhere to the laws.

**Defective and outdated Common Roll**

All issues of illegality and violence all emanate from the Common Roll. The Common Roll used was from 2002 and was
tempered with where certain villages in Goroka with 8,000 voters had been reduced to 5,000 eligible voters in 2022 whereas
certain villages with a population of 2,000 had over 6,000 eligible voters.

The Common Roll needs to be cleansed by ensuring that all those who have registered through NID or Civil Registry are
automatically on the Roll and the Village Court officials should be asked to verify every voter on the Common Roll. If any
problems of duplicate names or the Common Roll is over and above the National Census, then the Village Court officials are
disciplined, charged and terminated. The Ward and Common Roll should be updated in January every year from the data
from the Village Recorder under the DPLGA.

**Use of proper and legal names for villages, streets, clans and tribes**

All polling station names should only be those recognised under the *Names Act*. For example, polling stations had names such
as Kabiufa Village Rest House or Akameku Primary School or Waukave Street in Goroka town that listed specific clans and
street names or suburbs in terms of urban places.

The current Common Roll in Goroka has names like Christopher Field, Saitens Residence or Triton Store, which are names
that do not exist in law or identified to clans and villages. There were instances in Daulo electorate where ballot papers from
Numbia Plantation were shifted to Mando near Obihaka Plantation, but people voted as the ballot papers were already
brought in.

The Common Roll with every person in a Ward area listed under alphabetic order is dangerous and time consuming and
a person from a village in another ward can vote in another village. For example, the Common Roll for Nokondi Ward 3,
Mimanalo LLG should list the eight villages and each clan should start with names of clan leaders and their family and flow
down to others.

In the present situation, John Peter from Kabiufa High School farm had to show up at three polling stations in Kabiufa and
vote where his name is listed. Ruben Maio Mole from Namanelehuso Clan should front up at Gorobiyufa polling station
in Kabiufa village instead of checking his name at Gorarove or Kabiufa High School or Anego Plantation polling stations.

**Improved Common Roll and verification and sanctions**

The Common Roll must be updated and verified by NID, National Census and verified by Village Court officers who will be
penalised if the Common Roll exceeds the Census or names of those on NID does not show on the Common Roll. Further,
the Common Roll must be listed in wards, villages, polling stations and clans and family and not names listed for the whole
ward starting with the alphabet, rendering the Common Roll as useless.

**Safe and secured voting for all eligible voters**

Elections and voting in PNG is about been fair and free to vote through secret means and not delegated or usurped by
community leaders or thugs or hooligans who want to distribute papers for candidates of their choice and preselected persons
marking all preferences.

Any polling must start at 8:00 am and close at 6:00 pm and counting/scrutiny must commence at 8:00 am the next day.
Delay in counting only builds up tension resulting in disputes and threats and violence. For example, if Australia Electoral
Commission uses ballot papers and when polling ends at 6:00 pm, it has staff that are ready to count starting at 7:00 pm.
Ballot papers are counted manually.
The PNGEC needs to start to have proper planning and administration so the election process can be conducted effectively and efficiently. The election process must be upholding the principles of secret ballot, one person-one vote, universal franchise, in order to determine whether or not the elections were free and fair.

**Counting/scrutiny of ballots should be localised in districts**

Counting of ballots from each electorate must be localised. For the EHP, fears of tribal and clan conflicts resulted in all ballot boxes extracted to Goroka for counting. This exercise only reinforces and encourages the people that the state and its agencies are incapable of taking care of counting and declarations and trust in the laws and process and the security personnel. What is the utility in extracting ballot boxes from Marawaka in Obura-Wonenara to Goroka for counting and who is footing the bills? The counting for Daulo or Unggai-Bena must be counted at their own district headquarters using state resources and officials that would certainly earn respect in our process.

By localising counting, this will save costs and add value to the local communities and workers in the district to foster good relationships. The responsibility in a democratic society is for the people to be responsible voters and they must respect the electoral process and not by use of Police. For example, during the LLG elections prior to 1997, every villager in each ward would assemble at the primary school and ballots are cast and when polling ends at 4:00 pm, the ballots are counted there and then and the councillor is declared there on the same day.

The PNGEC culture of ballot boxes being transported in convoys by Police and locked in sealed containers at police stations and supervised opening and delivery of boxes to counting centres must cease as it only creates insecurity and creates tensions as well as huge costs in transport convoys, security and storage.

### 4.8 Conclusion

The constant shifting of dates and delay in preparing the Common Roll, polling stations and polling dates cast doubts on the integrity of the elections even if they are conducted properly. The people of PNG have their own assumptions and bias against the PNGEC and it is good for the country that elections must be conducted as required by law and on time instead of creating doubts on the integrity of the election process in PNG.

Poor planning of the polling dates resulted in many illegal actions by candidates, voters, supporters and election officials. For example, EHP voted on 12 and 13 July and counting started on 21 July which was only seven days away from the date for the Return of Writs. There is likely to be many election disputes in the Courts noting that most counting was done hurriedly, and objections and disputes were not addressed as per the Organic Law on National and Local Level Government Elections (OLNLLGE).

The observation matters are raised to ensure the integrity of the polling and elections must be maintained and independence of the PNGEC must be paramount. The general observation that is applicable in most polling stations in EHP is that the most disadvantaged persons such as females, disabled, elderly and the poor were not given any opportunity to decide how they should cast their ballots in secret for candidates of their choice but had to accept the decision made by mobs and those who have received much support including cash from candidates.

The PNGEC needs to seriously conduct a study into the election results and explain anomalies such as that of the polling station for the University of Goroka where thousands of staff and students from all over the country voted. But how could all the votes in that polling station be for a single candidate and that is a phenomenon that only PNGEC can explain.

The PNGEC should also commission a study or survey in all colleges or universities in PNG whether the students and staff voted freely and in a secure environment with their names on the Common Roll.
5. Ialibu-Pangia Open observation report
Observers: Joel Yaki and Rose Enge

5.1 Background of Ialibu-Pangia District/Electorate

The Ialibu-Pangia Open electorate is one of the five open electorates in SHP. The other electorates are Imbonggu, Mendi-Munihu, Nipa-Kutubu, and Kagua-Erave.

Geographically, Ialibu-Pangia electorate is situated in the eastern part of SHP. The electorate occupies a huge land mass with many river systems, mountainous landscapes, valleys and plateaus. It extends political boundaries with Imbonggu electorate in northwest and east with WHP, separated by the Kagul River. In the southwest, the electorate shares its political border with the Kagua-Erave electorate.

Culturally, the people of Ialibu-Pangia are of two cultures — the Kewabi and Wiru cultures. The two cultures, however, share some common cultural traits, lifestyles, traditions and customs. The main different cultural identity of the electorate is the two distinctive languages spoken, Wiru dialect in Pangia and Kewabi dialect in Ialibu.

Some parts of the electorate suffer from basic services due to geographical landscapes and lack of infrastructure services. Although some areas are remote and isolated, basic services are gradually reaching the people. An emerging better road network system is connecting village to village providing accessibility to services. For instance, now the coffee produced in South Wiru LLG is sold in WHP because of road and transportation accessibilities.

In terms of socio-economic development, there are gradual improvements such as better road systems; improved transport system; improved rural banking system in both districts; more services such as education, health, communication; and improved commercial activities or spin-off business activities.

The major development in the Ialibu-Pangia electorate is the establishment of the Western Pacific University. The electorate has changed and will continue to develop under the leadership of current MP, Hon Peter O’Neill.

Figure 3: Map of Ialibu-Pangia District

Source: 2011 PNG National Population and Housing Census (NSO, 2013)

5.2 Political history of Ialibu-Pangia Electorate

Ialibu and Pangia districts were established during colonial administration in the 1960s. The colonial administration established the said districts for effective administration. Until the national government’s Decentralisation Act on Provincial Government and Local Level Government Acts, Ialibu and Pangia districts emerged as Ialibu-Pangia District. The district’s capital was at Ialibu Station, which to this day is still the district headquarters.

The first elected member of Ialibu-Pangia in the 1970s to the House of Assembly was Hon. Turi Wari. After independence Hon. Pundia Kange won in the first NGE in 1977. From 1987 to 2012 Hon. Roy Yaki was the member. He was succeeded by Hon. Peter O’Neill the current sitting member and former prime minister, from 2012 onwards. The Ialibu-Pangia electorate has enjoyed political stability over a period of time as the members elected have served more than three terms unlike other electorates in the Highlands region.
The district has five local level governments. They are Kewabi LLG, Ialibu Urban LLG, East Pangia LLG, and Wiru LLG.

5.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

Over the elections, the number of candidates contesting the Ialibu-Pangia Open has generally been fewer compared to other electorates in SHP and the Highlands region as a whole. In the 2022 NGE, there were only nine candidates, all of them male. The incumbent member is Peter Paire O’Neill who was a two-term prime minister from 2011 and 2019. The other notable candidates were lawyer Stanley Liria and Professor Sam Sirox Kari. The PANGU Pati endorsed Stanley Liria while the New Generation Party (NGP) endorsed Professor Kari. All the rest were either nominated as pro or independent candidates.

5.4 Observation of campaign

The elections in the Highlands region is always expensive and Ialibu-Pangia electorate is no exception. The nominations were at the Ialibu Station ad everyday people went in crowds to see their candidate nominated with singing and chanting. However, it was obvious that the four-term MP and two-term former prime minister would return with support from every corner of the electorate. Below are some of the campaign rallies the observers attended.

On the afternoon of 26 June 2022, the people of Ialibu Urban LLG, Ward 1 were called by the Deputy CEO of Ialibu/Pangia District Administration Michael Ariando to meet at his place in Ialibu Station. The meeting was called purposely to talk about the 2022 NGE. He said that in the previous elections there was never a gathering as such and that this was the first of its kind to meet and talk about the election. He said the gathering was for the sitting MP Hon Peter O’Neill and that he will be sent back to Parliament and that he will form the next government.

The observers interviewed some people and sought their opinions on what they think about the election and who they favoured the most. The views are paraphrased as follows:

They said that in Ialibu-Pangia, they have only one party, one member and that they are ready to send him back to the Parliament. The entire Ialibu stood united for their leader Hon Peter O’Neill. As expected there was a clear resentment for PANGU in Ialibu-Pangia electorate since the PANGU Pati-led government voted Hon Peter O’Neill out from the prime ministership in 2019. There was a clear line between PNC Party vs Pangu Pati politics in the Ialibu-Pangia electorate. The people were divided between these two lines of parties with only a few undecided.

Almost everyone favours the sitting MP Hon. Peter O’Neill. They said he brought light into the darkness. They said they have roads linking right into villages and that he also pays their children’s school fees. He is the favourite son of Ialibu-Pangia.

Some of the voters came from Pangia and stayed till late. When asked how they will go back to Pangia they responded by saying that they have the O’Neill Highway and the coaster bus drivers like driving up and down the O’Neill Highway. These are some of their pride and they are not giving up on Peter O’Neill.

Hon. Peter O’Neill does not campaign. His supporters hardly campaign for him. The people of Ialibu-Pangia tell him not to campaign because his actions campaign for him. People are not blind. They tell him that he will go to Parliament with a landslide victory.

The people in Ialibu-Pangia want Peter O’Neill to go to the Parliament and form the next government. He is the people’s choice. He has other name tags such as:

- Bikpla muruk no save suruk;
- Kwila blong Ialibu-Pangia;
- Wiru king;
- King of infrastructure;
- Father of free education; and
- Father of free health care.

Campaign strategies

There were several campaign strategies used in the Ialibu-Pangia electorate to showcase their policies and reasons to contest. One of the most common strategies most candidates deployed is through rallies. A rally is a political gathering where many candidates are invited to speak on a public stage. Different rival candidates hosted gatherings or rallies entertaining huge crowds. People came in groups performing traditional dances expressing moral and numerical support for the candidate. Campaign rallies inform voters on their policies showing political alliance with like-minded candidates in an attempt to exchange preferences. We observed many rallies, one such is stated below:
On 30 June 2022, singsing groups from all over SHP came to witness Peter O’Neill’s rally at Ialibu Station. It was a very exciting day for the people of Ialibu-Pangia. There was red (PNC colour) all over Ialibu Station. PNC Party leader, Hon Peter O’Neill and his candidates from the whole SHP attended. He was accompanied by Imbonggu candidates who call themselves 7-in-1, challenging Pila Niningi. His endorsed candidate Francis Awesa was also with the team. The 9-in-1 Regional Team was also there with his endorsed candidate, Philemon Embel. Some prominent businessmen from SHP also attended to show their undivided support to Peter O’Neill.

All the open and regional candidates who attended said they were there to support O’Neill form the next government and kill PANGU and corruption. They said they don’t want PANGU Pati anymore.

On 26 June 2022, a campaign rally was hosted for Peter O’Neill in Apenda village, East Pangia LLG. It was sponsored by 12 councillors of East Pangia LLG. More than 5,000 plus people attended. The entire event was dominated by red colour T-shirts and caps, and the crowd shouting and chanting in Wiru dialect “Peter wi aya wi aya” and “Wok mas go yer” — the PNC Party slogan. All speeches were in support of O’Neill. The speeches acknowledged the member for the tremendous changes he had brought into the electorate and assured him that the five councils are intact.

PANGU Pati also rallied at Ialibu. However, their invited guests Prime Minister James Marape and Governor for SHP William Powi did not attend.

Some of the main campaign strategies in the Ialibu-Pangia Electorate were:

- **Party politics:** The Ialibu-Pangia people only have one party and that is PNC. The leader Peter O’Neill led the onslaught of political parties’ politics by labelling PANGU as the Momase Party and that it is only borrowed by the highlanders. The campaign in Ialibu-Pangia and SHP as a whole was PNC vs Pangau giving little or no room to other political parties.

- **Candidates alliances:** The candidates also aligned themselves with the political parties. The game of Government vs Opposition was clearly on show in Ialibu-Pangia and the neighboring Imbonggu electorate and throughout Hela and SHP.

- **Political party colour:** All over SHP and Hela Province, two colours were used to show support for either PNC or PANGU. All PNC supporters wore red caps and T-shirts while Pangau wore green caps and T-shirts. This was the opportune time for people to really show their support to the political parties.

- **Display of posters and billboards:** Posters and billboards were placed at every household and public place. One observation was that most houses had PNC posters but not many PANGU posters. Some posters and billboards of PANGU were even removed and taken down.

- **Money and food:** Election time is a time of feasting. During campaign, plenty of food including cooked and live animals were exchanged for votes. Money power was also evident in the Ialibu-Pangia campaign. Each ward and village was given money to mobilise their tribes to vote for a candidate.

- **Campaign houses:** Another election campaign strategy was the campaign houses. Candidates organised campaign houses to entertain people. Feasts and social activities were organised as part of entertainment.

### 5.5 Observation of polling

On 6 July, 2022, ballot boxes for the Ialibu-Pangia electorate were delivered to Ialibu Station from the provincial capital, Mendi. The boxes were escorted by heavy security personnel and a convoy of vehicles loaded with supporters of the candidates. The empty ballot boxes were safely locked in the cell block in Ialibu Police Station. The ballot boxes were well secured in Ialibu Police cell, prior to 11 July, 2022, the polling day. On 11 July, 2022, about 9am the ballot boxes and the ballot papers were dispatched to council wards for polling, escorted by security personnel and polling officials to the polling venues. Two police personnel were assigned to every polling venue. For some villages, the one day polling continued the next day due to timing and the long distance travelled.

Due to logistical problems, this report only covers Ialibu Urban Wards 1, 2 and 3. The setup of polling booths commenced around 8am to 10am. Awareness on voting took about another hour. Voting finally commenced in the respective wards at about 11am.

Some issues observed are as follows:

- Names of some people who voted in 2012 and 2017 were not on the Common Roll.
- Double voting was evident.
- Most of the voters’ names appeared more than once on the Common Roll.
- Monetary incentives were provided to lure votes by certain candidates. Their supporters were seen giving money to voters in order to vote for their candidates at the polling.
- People voted on behalf of other family members in absentia.
Although illegal, the remaining ballot papers were shared among the candidates so that all the ballot papers could be used up.

Voter intimidation was very high. The polling area was highly volatile as supporters of candidates were trying to exert their power to get as many votes as possible from the voters.

Apart from the above issues, voting was completed successfully in each of the wards and at about 5:30 pm the boxes were taken to Ialibu Police Station for lock up, and then taken to Mendi.

On 11 July 2022, at the Ialibu Kewabi LLG, Pale Council Wards 1 and 2; and Yarena Council Wards 1 and 2; Muli Ward 3; Mondada Wards 1 and 2; and Ialibu Urban 1; the following was observed:

- **Polling officials not impartial:** The polling officials were not impartial and found to be supporters of certain political parties and candidates for both the regional and open seats. Both the Polling Officials and their assistants were campaign coordinators for the candidates. All polling officials were villagers.
- **Two days polling:** Some wards did not complete voting on Monday so voting continued on Tuesday. Ballot boxes for the remaining wards in Ialibu-Pangia were brought in late on Tuesday night and then extracted to Mendi on Wednesday under heavy security escort in preparation for counting.
- **Separate polling sections:** Two polling sections were set up within the same polling booth to separate the male and female voters. The candidates’ ID size photos and their names and box numbers were displayed for public viewing.
- **2017 Common Roll:** The 2017 Common Roll was used for polling in both wards.
- **Secret ballot:** In both wards secret ballot voting was observed. The old and illiterate were assisted by their immediate relatives to mark their votes. In certain instances, some young boys, especially relatives of a certain candidate, forcefully pulled out the ballot papers, especially from their relatives and casted the votes on their behalf.
- **Absence of scrutineers:** Where there were no scrutineers of candidates present at polling booths illegal practices were bound to happen.
- **No names on the Common Roll:** Those who had names on the Common Roll were allowed to vote. Also, relatives were allowed to cast votes on behalf of those who were absent, which is illegal. However, everyone, in agreement, used this as a matter of their own principle.
- **Extra ballot papers:** The polling officials claimed the extra ballot papers after everyone had voted but the community intervened and stopped them. After some heated exchange of words, everyone agreed to share the ballot papers with their local candidates as well as the regional candidates.

Generally, voting in these two wards was peaceful and without major problems especially intimidation. The polling officials departed Pale village at 1:00 pm to the other polling areas mentioned below:

**Yarena Wards 1 and 2**

These two wards were polling along the main roadside. I arrived at 1:20 pm and observed for 30 minutes.

- Separate polling booths were set up for male and female voters and secret ballot voting was exercised by voters whose names were on the Common Roll.
- A separate queue was formed for those whose names were not in the Common Roll but they were allowed to vote. Polling started at 10:00 am and finished at 5:00 pm.

**Mondada Wards 1 and 2.**

- In these wards, the polling officials were seen performing as PNGEC staff. Polling was done by secret ballot voting. Voters whose names were not on the Common Roll were placed in queue and allowed to cast their votes.

**Muli Ward 3**

- Secret ballot voting was done using the Common Roll. Almost 90 percent of the votes were cast for the PANGU Pati candidates for both the regional and open seats. Polling closed at 4:30 pm.
- Some voters indicated that they were happy that two separate polling booths were set up for both male and female voters.
- Bribery by supporters of candidates in the polling areas stopped voters from exercising their right to vote the leader of their choice.
- Security was less effective to ensure a safe, free, and fair polling.

Polling in the five LLGs was completed on 12 July 2022. All ballot boxes from the five LLGs were taken to Ialibu Police Station cell blocks and locked safely under tight security. On 14 July 2022, under heavy security, the ballot boxes from Ialibu-Pangia were safely transported to the provincial capital, Mendi, for counting. The boxes were all locked up safely in separate containers from other electorate containers.
5.6 Observation of counting and declaration

The Momei Oval was selected as the counting venue. The field was well fenced all around with only one main entrance. Five electorates had separate counting stations with each electorate conducting counting according to the LLGs respectively. For Ialibu-Pangia electorate, one long building was divided into three rooms for the three LLGs. The counting rooms were well prepared and well facilitated with counting equipment such as distribution tables, ballot paper trays prepared for each candidate, forms arranged for relaxation, and tally data boards displayed to enter data.

The gates were controlled and maintained by security forces. They thoroughly checked anyone entering the main gate into the counting area; all polling officials, electoral officials and NGO observers, and others as well. Identity cards were required for anyone to enter the gate, otherwise nothing else was permitted to take into the counting areas.

- On 18 July 2022, at 12:00 pm, Ialibu-Pangia electorate was the first electorate to commence counting, starting with ballot boxes from Ialibu Urban LLG. The boxes were removed from the containers in front of the security personnel and transported to the counting venue. Only four out of six boxes were counted on the first day. At 4:30 pm counting was suspended for the day to be continued the next day.
- On 19 July 2022, counting resumed at 11am and covered all five LLGs from the electorate. Counting progressed smoothly without any disruptions and disturbance until the incumbent member for Ialibu-Pangia Peter O’Neill was declared the member-elect on 21 July 2022.
- Generally, counting for Ialibu-Pangia was fair and without undue influence. Counting progressed smoothly and effectively without any hiccups and delays. Counting duration was only for four days. On 21 July at 1:00 pm, Peter O’Neill was declared member-elect for Ialibu-Pangia electorate on primary count with a tally of 45,106 which is 62.2 percent, exceeding the absolute majority of 35,519 of the total formal votes of 73,036. The total ballots were 73,206 with 170 informal.

5.7 Findings and recommendations

The campaign, polling and counting for the Ialibu-Pangia Open electorate displays high discipline among the candidates and voters. Some of the recommendations are:

- There should be separate common rolls for male and female voters.
- The Common Roll must be regularly updated so that every citizen is registered and an accurate population data is kept. The rights of the people were deprived when their names were not registered on the Common Roll.
- Polling officials should be appointed on merit rather than politicised. The polling officials should all be public servants and not villagers who are coordinators and campaign managers for candidates. Proper application and screening is required for improvement in this area. NGOs and church pastors would do a good job as polling officials too.
- Logistics must be improved to make one-day polling become a reality.

5.8 Conclusion

In the 2022 NGE, a total of eight candidates contested for the Ialibu-Pangia Open electorate in SHP. All candidates were male. Two political parties dominated the 2022 National Election in Ialibu-Pangia electorate, namely PNC Party and PANGU Pati.

The most common methods strategised by candidates in the election campaign are display and distribution of posters, T-shirts, caps, rallies, campaign house entertainments, and also handing out cash and in-kind for funerals, compensations and religious activities and also to groups that invited the candidates. Through these means, bribery was very obvious where huge amounts of money was given out.

However, voting was free, fair and trouble free throughout the electorate from 11 to 12 July 2022. In all polling areas, there were separate polling booths for male and female voters.

Counting was carried out by counting officials, lasted four days and was fair. The ballot boxes were in perfect condition, not hijacked, disputed or tampered. Ialibu-Pangia electorate was the first electorate in SHP to declare its member-elect, the incumbent member and leader of PNC Party and former prime minister, Hon. Peter O’Neill.
6. North Waghi Open observation report
Observers: Rev Simon Sakul and Susan Aris Aba

6.1 Background of North Waghi District/Electorate

Jiwaka Province has three districts, North Waghi, Jimi and South Waghi Anglimp. North Waghi is in the north and South Waghi is to the south of the fertile Waghi Valley and is geographically divided by the famous Waghi River, which has its tributary in WHP, and cuts through South Waghi Anglimp District precisely at Anglimp and flows beside Kudjip and Minj LLG, all forming South Waghi Anglimp District.

The two LLGs of North Waghi and Nondugl situated beside Waghi River have land boundaries of Kimil to the west which shares its borders with WHP and Kumbal (Gaa No. 1) to the east which shares its borders with Simbu Province. Further north, it shares its boundaries with Jimi District divided by the Jimi Waghi Divide Ranges. The district has a population of 78,499 as stated in the 2011 Census (NSO, 2013) and has a land mass of 453km$^2$ which makes North Waghi the smallest district in Jiwaka Province. Its headquarter is in Banz.

North Waghi people speak the Kuman language which is similar to Simbu Kuman dialect. The ascent is different to South Waghi Kudjip LLG and Minj LLG which speak Kuma dialect and is totally different to Kambia which lives further south. The Anglimp South Waghi speak Melpa dialect of the WHP people. There are 14 big tribes in North Waghi: Dambe, Waka, Wika, Owalka, Omgar, Dange, Senglap, Kumuka, Ngantskup, Kapangup, Bable-Konska, Komblo, Sekaka, and Kulaka. Their land is constituted by traditional land boundaries, customs, geographical landforms, beliefs, taboos and so on. Further, there are some 200–300 small clans within the tribes, descending to the “hauman” where critical decisions for economy, warfare and leadership is discussed.

Historically, the North Waghi economy was dependent on plantations like the Waghi Mek Coffee plantations situated in both North and South Waghi. Its headquarters was in Talu in North Waghi. Waghi Mek was the biggest plantation second to Gumanch Coffee Plantation in WHP. It was the biggest revenue earner and created employment opportunities for the North Waghi LLG and also employed labourers as far as SHP and Simbu Province. Unfortunately, Waghi Mek went out of business in the early 2000s.

The local people experienced a windfall of cash flow when labourers did their shopping in Banz town or at informal selling points. This helped in paying school fees for their children. The number of coffee plantations increased to about 15 consisting dry and wet coffee mills in North Waghi. Some have ceased while others are still operating. Today, many people in North Waghi have shifted from cash crop farming to gardening when Waghi Mek went out of business due to climate change and drop in prices of coffee in the early 2000s. Other crops like peanut, pineapple and oranges are grown but do not have the capacity to expand so they are used mainly for consumption.

North Waghi District has five secondary schools and numerous primary schools. It also has seven health centres, electricity grid connections and a good serviced road network.

Figure 4: Map of North Waghi District

Source: 2011 PNG National Population and Housing Census (NSO, 2013)
6.2 Political history of North Waghi Electorate

North Waghi was an integral part of WHP until 2012 when it separated and came under the Jiwaka Province after its creation.

Kaibelt Doria was the first member for North Waghi in the House of Assembly in 1964 and was the Minister for Posts and Telegraph. The first communication tower in Banz town was built during his time as the Post and Telegraph Minister. After independence, Talu Bolt was elected into the first National Parliament in 1977 and served for one term, 1977 to 1982. He lost to William Ekip Wii in the 1982 NGE. William Wii served for two terms and lost to Yimbal Aipe in the 1997 NGE. Dr Fabian Pok, an accountant, unseated William Wii in the 1997 NGE but lost to Michael Mas Kal in 2002. In the 2007 NGE, Benjamin Mul won the seat, however, he lost to Dr Fabian Pok in 2012. Dr Pok held the seat for two terms but lost to Benjamin Mul in the 2022 NGE.

6.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

Twenty-four candidates from the private and public sector including well-to-do individuals in the district contested the North Waghi Open seat in the 2022 NGE. Some held university degrees while some only possessed limited educational qualifications but live successful lives in the community. Only a few candidates were endorsed by political parties. Former member, Fabian Pok, was a United Resources Party man. Other parties that endorsed candidates in the electorate include PNC Party, National Alliance Party, Pangu Pati, Liberal Party and People’s Movement for Change Party. Eighteen candidates including the member-elect contested as independent candidates representing 75 percent of the total number of candidates.

6.4 Observations of campaign

Campaign commenced as early as two or three weeks into the campaign period and ended one week before polling.

Pre-campaign period

Campaign houses were set up everywhere. Candidates handed out cash and food in order to mobilise support groups. Feasts were organised and the intention of the candidates to contest the election were announced. You could see clearly which tribes supported which candidate. They showed their strength by mobilising and moving around in vehicles. They even sought advice from former MPs and even tried to win their support and favour so that they could win over supporters.

Campaign strategies

The campaign period is the time when people move in huge numbers from village to village mobilising their supporters and voters. It is also a time of feasting, hosting marriage ceremonies as well as reconciliation. Below are some common activities observed during campaign.

Singing and chanting

A song was composed for former member Dr Fabian Pok. Songs were also composed in North Waghi Kuman dialogue for some candidates. Others had a specific music for them only, so when played, people knew who the candidate was. Chanting of candidates’ names was very popular such as “RB” for Robert Burum. This strategy was to gain popularity.

Feasting

Candidates hosted parties and invited voters to their homes. Election time is when people enjoy free food and free drinks, especially those who laze around.

The candidates do these to secure votes, identify their numbers and support. However, trouble arises when voters’ disloyalty is discovered. “Money politics” becomes obvious as the person who slaughters the highest number of pigs and cows wins the favour of the people.

In the 2012 NGE, North Waghi seemed to be the most expensive seat in PNG because some candidates said that they will buy each head with K1,000. They were over excited because North Waghi came under the newly-created Jiwaka Province.

Social media

Post Courier, NBC and The National were allowed access into the Banz counting site and reported live on the counting. Internet services were controlled during counting at certain places but were allowed to report on the tally during evenings.

Collaboration of candidates

Many candidates collaborated to share their second preferential votes. For example, the candidates from Nondugl LLG collaborated and secured all their secondary preferential votes for Benjamin Mul. His votes increased from 7,000 to 21,000 overtaking Dr Pok’s votes at 11,000. Benjamin Mul collected the winning votes when two other candidates from Nondugl LLG were eliminated. Teine Krokei’s votes was the decider. Although the member-elect was very quiet during campaign, the collaboration from Nondugl LLG candidates to block second preferential votes for him made him win. Candidates from Banz LLG did the same however people casted their second preferential votes to the candidates who gave them money and food.
Alliances
Some candidates sponsored other candidates to secure second preferential votes for them. By doing this they blocked primary votes for themselves and also blocked secondary votes from their allies. In Banz LLG, however, this was not the case as leaders allowed the people to cast their secondary votes freely because they knew that they had accepted money and food from other candidates as well. So, their second preference votes were to pay for what they had received.

Political rallies
Observers witnessed people overcrowded in moving vehicles with drunken drivers but Police could not control them. Dr Malts Wai hosted his campaign rally in Wara Mombol field where Hon Renbo Paita was the guest of honour. Dr Fabian Pok hosted his campaign rally at Councillor Peter Angelie's residence near Banz District office. Twenty-four candidates nominated for the North Waghi seat but only a few campaigned. It may be that some nominated only to access political party resources. The Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties should be clear about this matter.

Invitations
Many people in North Waghi invited candidates to their homes to show their support or alliance. These people may have some relationship with the candidate through marriage, or a former school mate, or is confident that the candidate is going to win.

Display of posters and billboards
Billboards of all sizes were seen erected along the boundary of Catholic Mission Station and Banz town. Most billboards and posters were of the regional seat and were displayed in Banz town because it is the central business location for North Waghi and Jiwaka Province. All shopping malls in Banz had all sizes of posters of candidates displayed. Banners were put up during campaign rallies and even during polling and counting in North Waghi. Quite interesting is that the posters, billboards and banners were still up even after the election until the owners arranged to take them down.

Policies and motives for contesting
Many candidates had profound and constructive policies with regard to service delivery where they claimed that the current MP did not perform or had failed on his/her election promises or commitment. The reason why they contested is to fulfil their promises and also because of sheer frustration. Others contested to access the political parties' resources. Others contested to secure secondary votes for their sponsor.

6.5 Observations of polling

Banz LLG
Polling for North Waghi started at around 12:00 noon on 18 July 2022. People came as early as 7am responding to the alarm and shouts of the village leaders. The atmosphere was tense as voters took sides with drunkards planning to force and control polling stations. As soon as the polling teams and security personnel landed, women queued in their line as well as the men in theirs. There were separate lines and polling booths for men and women at all 45 polling stations in North Waghi. But this was for only a few hours as rowdy behaviour forced the polling into mob voting and controlled voting because time was running out. Fighting erupted and at times the PO suspended polling but had to resume at the request of village leaders because time was running out.

A nasty incident happened at Molka Ward 2 polling station. The polling booth was destroyed and fighting broke out between supporters of rival candidates. Security personnel escorted polling officials to Banz Police Station but later returned to complete the polling at the request of leaders. Polling continued into the night. Ballot papers were distributed to each candidate to fill and then signed by the PO.

Nondugl LLG
Polling at Nondugl LLG was peaceful. Candidates collaborated to secure the secondary preferential votes and this eventually led to Hon. Benjamin Mul winning the seat. Mul did not host campaign rallies nor was he a hot candidate but he collaborated with other candidates to secure their secondary votes which made him win. Mul won only on secondary votes. As the former MP, he maintained his popularity.

6.6 Observations of counting and declaration

Primary count
The count of primary votes proceeded without problems. Scrutineers of candidates and the security personnel monitored every process thoroughly from polling to counting. The scrutineers kept their eyes on each other's and made sure there was no foul play.

Second preferences of votes by exclusion/elimination process and declaration
After the primary counts were completed, quality checks were done for all the candidates. Some ballot papers were informal
and thus placed in the informal box. The candidates were then ranked from the highest to the lowest based on their primary scores. Exclusions started from the candidates with the lowest score to the candidates with the highest score. Exclusion was interesting because candidates moved from one placing to another depending on the number of second preferences they collected. After the exclusion of candidate 22 (Teine Korokoi) who was the decider, independent candidate Benjamin Mul was declared the winner with 21,000 votes beating the incumbent member Dr Fabian Pok with 11,300 votes.

6.7 Findings and recommendations

These are some of the recommendations that must be taken into consideration for a free, fair and safe election in the future and also to uphold democracy and the election process:

- Introducing and testing of the electronic polling/counting machine (Biometric System) in 2027. But it must be first trialled in an LLG election.
- Update the Common Roll every two years well in advance before the next NGE.
- Conduct another national census to identify the actual number of eligible and non-eligible voters.
- The Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPAC) must make sure political parties endorse more candidates to contest in future NGEs.

6.8 Conclusion

Development agendas and policies are not seriously observed and taken into consideration by voters for the betterment of their district, community, and their individual daily livelihood to vote for a leader with broader ideas and accountability in using the DSIP for effective service delivery. A person can throw his vote for a candidate who gives him a K50, K20, or a K10. This is a clear indication of PNG’s ineffective electoral system compared to other countries. How can our parliamentary leaders focus on taking PNG forward when the fast-growing population is causing law and order problems everywhere in PNG?

From the election observation, the people/voters are still driven by large amounts of cash handouts and food exchanges by candidates to vote for them.

As we see here, we are being driven back to the primitive ages and not going forward like other developed pacific countries. Our people are still living in poverty and whenever they are offered any form of cash, they accept it, spend it overnight and still want money because they are in dire need to spend it. In other words, we are going to vote for a money leader, rather than a visionary leader to deliver services and save the people from this poverty-stricken society.

It really does not go down well and the future does not look bright after 47 years of independence for this country. Who will ever do the right thing and not become rich using the people’s DSIP as their wages to help themselves with their wives and children.
7. Karimui-Nomane Open observation report
Observers: Ben Joel and Able Bani

7.1 Background of Karimui-Nomane District/Electorate

The Karimui-Nomane Open electorate is located about 60kms from the provincial town, Kundiawa. Occupying two thirds of the total land mass of Simbu Province, Karimui-Nomane is the largest district in the province compared to the other five districts.

Although the Karimui-Nomane District is the largest in the Simbu Province, the electorate remains the least developed despite several efforts being put by past successive governments. The road and bridge infrastructure in the district has gradually deteriorated and this has been a long overdue problem faced by the people. Health facilities continue to deteriorate chasing away health workers.

All government schools except church agencies are rundown forcing students in the district to transfer to good schools in other districts and provinces. That is also one of the main reasons why an unprecedented number of students and parents migrate to other districts and provinces in search of better schools and better living conditions. Better living in this sense strictly connotes easy access to effective basic government services such as good road conditions, good health services, good schools, market access for subsistence farmers and small-scale SME and trade store business owners. These are important socioeconomic factors which assure hope and success in the lives of the people.

The main barriers of development in Karimui-Nomane District are:

- Harsh geographical terrain: Fast-flowing rivers and many high-rise mountains.
- Distance and remoteness: 60km from the township for accessibility and services.
- High rate of illiteracy: Only one in ten persons (10%) in Karimui-Nomane is educated to at least a certificate or diploma or degree level and that affects the level of development in the district. There is a high demand for people to be educated for better change and development in the district.
- Successive MPs under-performed: Past MPs did not deliver in terms of improvements, maintenance, workable policies and programs that really connects people, empower people, up-skill people, create avenues for revenues and such other economic incentives. After all money must be in the pockets of people and lives must be improved. This is yet to be achieved in the lives of the people of Karimui-Nomane.

The electorate consists of three LLGs: Salt, Nomane and Karimui. The three LLGs have a collective 64 council wards. Salt LLG has 24 wards, Nomane LLG has 13 wards and Karimui LLG has 27 wards. Each ward contains one or two sub-clans and are overseen by ward councillors that operate under their council president. Karimui is still not connected by road while Salt and Nomane are connected by the Bomai-Nilkare Highway that runs from Kundiawa to Kiari.

The main languages spoken by Karimui is the Pawaia language which is widely spoken across Karimui to Purari. The Salt people speak Kerry, Yuwii, and Kia languages while the Nomane commonly speak the Kewo-Meba, Mekene and Sarr languages. These languages also represent the main tribes. However, Salt and Nomane share similar cultures and can understand each other while Karimui is culturally and linguistically very different from Salt and Nomane. The population distribution in the 2022 NGE Common Roll shows that Salt LLG has 20,000, Nomane 13,000 and Karimui 18,000.

The geographical settings of Salt and Nomane LLGs are mostly rocky mountainous on thick soil layers covered with grassland and forest, perfect for herbivores such as cows, sheep, goats and horses. There is an abundance of livestock in the area. Mysterious channels of running water ooze out of rocks on every turn that even dry seasons don't affect their content. The houses beside the creek that have fish ponds usually don't run out of fish. The thick fertile soil layers and the altitude are conducive for garden food like cassava, kaukau, yams, potatoes, taro, bananas and a variety of greens and fruits. It is also a perfect place to look after pigs.

The economy for Salt and Nomane are powered by coffee and livestock. Karimui LLG is mostly valley and bigger than Salt and Nomane LLGs combined. Karimui LLG has a rich soil content and an untouched rain forest packed with wildlife. Apart from growing everything they need, they also grow cocoa, vanilla and coffee. The place has the potential to do more but needs government support. Salt and Nomane LLGs are connected by a semi-standard road. The 27 wards in Karimui LLG are scattered within the thick forest some kilometres apart and people are still using forest bush tracks.

The basic government services are either at a level so poor or just non-existent within the electorate. There is no district headquarters within the electorate and no motivation nor initiative for development projects to generate economic growth. The district has everything to sustain a life of abundance and generate economic development for itself and the country with proper management and leadership.
7.2 Political history of Karimui-Nomane Electorate

The Karimui-Nomane district was separated from Gumine District after the 1970s. Inuape Engaino (Karimui) was the first elected member for Karimui-Nomane to the House of Assembly in 1972. After national independence in 1975 when the House of Assembly was changed to the National Parliament, Nebare Kamun (Nomane) was the first elected MP representing the people of Karimui-Nomane District. Nebare Kamun served a single term in Parliament and lost the seat to his successor Paul Pawa Sisioka (Karimui) in 1982.

Paul Pawa Sisioka served two terms in the National Parliament and lost his seat to his successor Philip Yomo (Karimui) in 1992. Philip Yomo served a single term in the National Parliament and lost his seat to his successor Simeon Wai from Salt in 1997. Simeon Wai served a single term in Parliament and was unseated by Posi Menai of Karimui in 2002. Posi Menai served two terms (10 years) in the National Parliament and was unseated by Mogerema Sigo Wei (Salt) in 2012.

Mogerema Sigo Wei served a single term in the National Parliament and lost his seat to his successor Geoffrey Kama (Salt) in 2017. Geoffrey Kama served a single term and lost his seat to his successor Hon Francis Alua Yori of Salt in the 2022 NGE. It has been observed that from 2012 onwards, whether the MP retain their seat or not depends very much on the level of services and development delivered to the district. Generally, MPs must deliver basic services effectively in the district to have a better chance of retaining their seat.

Political history shows that the Yuwi-speaking group, although large in size, had never had one of their own elected representing Karimui-Nomane. In successive years, the Keri-speaking group had two elected MPs; Simeon G. Wai (1997) and Mogerema Sigo Wei (2012). However, in the 2022 NGE, a lawyer Francis Alua Yori, has set a new record by winning the prestigious seat for his people of Yuwi in the eleventh Parliament.

7.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

In the 2022 NGE, 51 candidates nominated to contest the Karimui-Nomane Open seat. The profile of candidates shows uneducated self-employed villagers to high school and university graduates, to engineers, lawyers, teachers, accountants, businessmen and development specialists. Only one female candidate, Bomai Gi Wei, a wife of former member Mogerema Sigo Wei, contested the Karimui-Nomane open seat. Only 17 candidates were endorsed by political parties while the rest nominated as independents.
7.4 Observations of campaign

This section describes the campaign and nomination in Karimui-Nomane. The campaign period is the time from nomination to one week before the polling.

Pre-campaign period

Pre-campaign is the period before the actual campaign which is after the nomination. The campaign in Karimui-Nomane began soon after the 2017 NGE. As the years went by, campaign by the current candidates who had intention to contest the 2022 NGE would have gone into full campaign unofficially. For example, visiting of Haus-Krai, bride price contribution, assistance in school fees, and other little community or social obligations were all converted and intended for campaign.

- **Assistance in time of need**: Assistance is a need-based campaign situation where both the candidates and voters have equal opportunity to market their intentions. That includes different forms of assistance as in school fees assistance, funeral assistance, bride price assistance, compensation assistance, and so forth. People market their problem to the candidate with an automatic assurance of voting possibilities while the candidates have all the opportunity to fetch votes by an act of giving money and other needed materials as to provide solution to the voter’s problem. The candidates with the highest assistance given are usually considered in the voting preferences.

- **Awareness**: There were many activities organised by candidates in the communities to market themselves and become popular in the communities. These activities include sports competitions, building hausman and feastings to mobilise support from different villages and tribes.

- **Enticement**: It was observed that enticements occurred in a very organised way by the candidates. It is very interesting to learn that candidates have used government projects, other recruitment drives and employment as a bait to entice voters. The people who have engaged in one of those benefits are considered to be induced on a debt trap basis to finally demand their loyalty to have their votes. Those candidates receive more votes because the voters were scared of losing their employment, and other income or money-making activities. Enticement is seen as a very effective campaign strategy for future candidates.

- **Projects**: Prior to election, some intending candidates initiated some forms of community projects which were also used as pre-campaign strategies to gain support. The incumbent member also delivered projects throughout the district to get support.

- **Nominations**: All nominations for Karimui-Nomane were at Kundiawa Lutheran Guesthouse due to the difficult terrain for Karimui-Nomane to nominate at one location in the district and also for safety of the candidates and their supporters.

Campaign strategies

When the PNGEC officially declared the opening of Writs on 20 June 2022, it was also for campaign to commence. After nomination, candidates used different strategies in their campaign. Some of the most common strategies used are as follows:

- **Money to Food**: Money to food is a campaign culture that is commonly practiced and is very popular in Karimui-Nomane. This is a concept where the flow of money is exchanges for food (pigs, lamb flaps, drinks, bilums of kaukau, pots of rice, banana, sugar cane, etc.). People killed pigs, cooked food and other stuff in exchange for the candidates to give them money.

- **Digital campaign**: Mobile technology has played a very pivotal role in Karimui-Nomane elections. Candidates who bought voters' phones, flex cards and transferred money (phone banking) and rang or SMS’d frequently secured votes effectively from families, clans, tribes, communities, and other groups and organisations. Given the geographical harshness and the very difficult road condition in Karimui-Nomane, digital campaign is a super highway that does not encounter roadblocks or obstacles. There is no distance in mobile technology. Digicel has played a very important role in PNG politics where voters and candidates could communicate with each other's effectively.

- **Social media campaign**: Most candidates and their supporters also participated in the social media discussions especially on Facebook groups such as the Karimui-Nomane Election Talks 2022. The candidates also created their own WhatsApp groups to keep themselves abreast of the progress of their campaign drive. Social media forums and discussion groups have influenced voters effectively. The Facebook and WhatsApp discussions, comments, debates and reactions all contributed effectively to influence people’s perceptions and decisions. Facebook, WhatsApp, Messenger and many other latest applications and platforms for digital communications all contributed effectively for that cause.

- **Education qualifications and experience**: Since 2012, the voters' perception on candidates’ educational qualifications has been a voting factor. Voters believe that a better educated candidate will represent them well in Parliament as well as bring development to the far flung remote district of Karimui-Nomane. It becomes the main influence on voters against money and other factors of campaign. The trend has swiftly moved away from uneducated to educated in a bid to vote a credible leader, among other factors. People’s choices in the 2022 NGE by electing a lawyer, Hon
Francis Alua Yori, is testament of the voters to choose between an educated and uneducated candidate, despite being wealthy or not. Thus, the chances of an uneducated candidate for Karimui-Nomane getting into Parliament in the future will be minimal.

- **Nere–Tere (Take and Give):** This is a political campaign tag used commonly in Simbu Province since 1982 when politics in Simbu took the centre stage in PNG and the great Simbu political icons like late Sir Iambakey Okuk and John Nilkare campaigned to win the prestigious provincial seat. The “Nere-Tere” or “Kaikai na Givim” (Tok Pisin) and “Take and Give” in English became the famous factor for voters. This has translated to some candidates who are now known as “Mr Same Speed”, “Mr Yes”, “Mr Walking ATM” and “Ya Moni”, and have become popular icons in the campaign period. Although some people say openly that Nere-Tere is bad, they can’t resist it because money is power.

- **Candidates alliance:** Candidates aligning themselves with other candidates to share their second and third preferences of votes were also becoming obvious in Karimui-Nomane. Like-minded candidates invited each other to their campaign rallies and openly announced their alliance to share their second votes. However, it was also noted that many candidates were choosing their alliances and confusing the voters. During the rallies, people often fixed their minds on whom to give their second and third preferences to depending on their candidates’ choice on who to establish alliance with.

- **Money power play:** It was also observed that candidates with more money were becoming more popular and powerful than those who had less money. They were able to fly to Karimui and cover all the three LLGs while candidates who did not afford only campaigned in areas within their reach. Huge sums of money were given out to different wards on the days leading up to polling. In Yobai Rest House, the Kumo Broyori clan of Ward 3, Salt LLG, with a population of 1,050 (according to the Common Roll), received a sum of K15,000 from candidate B1 and K10,000 from candidate B2 before polling.

  The money was then divided equally to all the members of the clan with each receiving K70 from candidate B1 and K50 from candidate B2. After the payment, it was agreed by the clan that candidate B1 will get 700 first preference vote and candidate B2 will get 300 first preference vote. It was further agreed within the clan that the first 1,000 second preference votes will also be exchanged among B1 and B2, respectively. The remaining 50 first preferences plus all the third preferences will be distributed among other candidates. People have no other option but to vote according to who they got the money and help from to maintain peace and stability.

- **Display and distribution of posters:** Posters were displayed in public places, house doors, front of trade stores and distributed to people. This method of campaign was strategised to gain familiarisation from the voters. This is a very effective way to gain popularity but wasn’t fully effective due to the vastness of the electorate and no road access. There were not many posters of the 51 intending candidates equally distributed throughout the electorate due to geographical constraints.

- **Campaign rallies and speeches:** An effective method of campaigning that gathers huge crowds is providing entertainment, food, drinks and the flow of cash. The rallies also involved more than one candidate to express political alliance for exchanging preferences. The program usually starts with some form of entertainment leading up to introductory, welcoming speeches from community leaders and influential people. Then the candidates were given the stage to address the people and talk about their intentions and policies. According to the interviews, there were some very convincing speeches from candidates about policies and intentions. Some speeches were about the upcoming benefits of projects and developments that will eventuate when the candidates making the speeches got elected. Some candidates pointed out the perceived bad decisions made by the current MP and explained why they are contesting.

- **Pre-polling intimidation and threats:** High powered rifles were carried around openly by supporters and clan members of candidates. It has become a norm to possess firearms when you are in the remotest place where there is no government presence. During the election period, people came with their own rifles to support their candidates and were willing to go all the way for them.

- **Hausman and campaign houses:** **Hausman** is an important part of culture. **Hausman** is a big house specially designed to accommodate only males belonging to a particular clan and serves as the house of meetings and important decision making by males. It also serves as the guesthouse for other male visitors from other clans. Every clan must have a **hausman** because it serves as a common ground where the respective clan’s important agendas are addressed and decisions are passed. **Hausman** can also be a school and a church that installs both knowledge and wisdom to the young generation of males. It upholds unity and strength within the clansmen because it is where they effectively communicate, eat, sleep, share experiences, make plans and enjoy each other’s company. Candidates are also aware of the importance of **hausman** therefore heavily invested in building **hausman** for clans where they received support from.

  Candidates supplied building materials like iron roofs, solar lights and beddings. However, this important **hausman** now turned into a campaign house where men, women, teenagers and children come together to discuss politics and
mainly used for “karim leg singsing” and illicit activities. The once respected hausman becomes a meeting place for people to carry out their daily activities.

### 7.5 Observations of polling

The initial date set for polling in the electorate was 14 July 2022. The polling date was later postponed to 18 July 2022. The ballot papers and boxes with polling officials for Salt LLG were transported by vehicles from Kundiawa under heavy escort by the security personnel to the designated voting areas. The ballot boxes and polling officials for Nomane and Karimui were transported by helicopter with security personnel and polling officials to their polling places. On 19 July 2022, the Karimui-Nomane Electorate conducted its polling. Some of the issues observed in the polling are:

- **Arrival of polling team:** The polling team arrived at 2:30 pm which is very late. The polling eventuated at 3:45 pm. All the people from one particular ward did not physically vote. In other parts of the LLG, the team stayed overnight and polling commenced the next day.

- **Control, block and distributive voting:** The ballots from Wards 2, 3 and 4 were all taken to one spot where votes were distributed to candidates according to how much they gave and connections they made with the people of the named wards. Both block and distributive voting system was used. One or two people voted for the entire community. The police and military personnel agreed with this as it seemed it was permitted by the ARO so the security personnel just assisted with the process. There was an argument between a candidate and the ARO for Salt LLG about the late changes in the polling places for Wards 4 and 5. The ARO is from the Salt LLG so was aware of the designated polling places therefore was accused of being dirty by candidate’s supporters for allowing this to happen.

- **The presence and roles of the security personnel:** The observers witnessed three Defence vehicles with armed men travelling to and from the place but never stopped to see whether polling was progressing well. If there was no noise, the Defence and Police assumed that polling was peaceful and quiet. However, most polling in Karimui-Nomane were robbed, coerced and intimidated to which Defense and Police had no power to control. The supporters of one candidate mobilised and held up the ballot papers of a ward in front of the security personnel. So, the work of the security personnel was of course not effective.

- **Separate lines for male and female:** There were two polling booths, one for the men and another for the women but there were no lines formed; that is, queue for both men and women. All that was observed was a crowd in circle at the polling station. A man standing, announced that all women should be sitting, gambling, marketing or go home. Only a few selected individuals were called, and they moved forward to vote on behalf of the majority. So, effectively, there was no sign of women and men participating freely in the polling. Women were suppressed, intimidated and their rights to vote were continuously being denied, controlled and coerced by men.

- **Does free, fair and safe election reflect in the polling place?** Obviously not, because the people did not vote as only a few individuals voted on their behalf. There was no secret ballot in the polling as ballot was hijacked to one polling booth to suppress others from voting. Most vulnerable were women and the old-aged.

### 7.6 Observations of counting and declaration

The counting for Karimui-Nomane Electorate commenced on 23 July 2022 at 11 am along with the six Simbu Open electorates and Simbu Regional after all the ballot boxes were extracted from all of Simbu Province. The counting station was built from canvas and water leaked through when it rained. In the past, proper tents were set up in each district.

- **Counting centres/stations:** The makeshift houses built by the contractors were not of standard especially the canvas that covered the roof. The sun's heating and cooling caused the canvas to soften and tore when there were strong winds. Counting had to be suspended on two occasions because of the rain and leaking canvas. There were a lot of complaints from the counting officials on the quality and quantity of the lunch provided. There were several days where the election officials went without water because the tank ran dry and they were not allowed to go in and out of the gate. The callers needed water to rehydrate after shouting out names and numbers for long hours.

- **Common Roll:** The actual population of the 2017 Common Roll in a particular polling station was 700 but was issued 1,050 ballot papers. There were 350 more papers than on the Common Roll. That means that the population growth of that ward is 50 percent by a record high. The reason given was that the ballot papers were in 50s per booklet. Ballot papers counted were more than the voting population according to the Common Roll in all the wards. Where the population is 710, the ballot issued were 750 because the booklets were packed in 50s. This created extra ballot papers for all the polling stations.

- **Name supersedes numbers:** Some of the ballot papers had numbers and names not corresponding. In this case names were counted. Most voters were not educated properly. The RO later explained that name superseded number when the name is different from the number.

- **Absence of ARO for Salt LLG:** The absence of the ARO for Salt LLG was due to threats received during polling. It is assumed that the threats might be from a certain candidate for the relocation of the two Salt boxes to the candidate’s
polling place.

- **Two ballot boxes set aside:** The PO for Noru Ward 19, Karimui LLG disappeared after the allegation of hijacked ballot boxes. It was assumed that it could be because of his life being in danger from the furious Karimui LLG supporters after making the allegation. Box EC-020167 from Talbakul Ward 26, Karimui LLG (1,050 ballot papers), was presented with only one outer seal and no inner seal. Both boxes were set aside and not counted.

- **Counting officials payments delayed:** The counting was suspended unnecessarily because of the delayed or non-payment of the counting officials which prolonged counting for Simbu's seats. Suspension of the counting were mostly during nights. The due date for the counting was postponed two times. It took exactly two weeks and two days (17 days) to declare MPs for the six Simbu electorates.

- **Counting officials:** Most polling and counting officials were teachers. Therefore, counting and balancing the numbers were made easier. However, the delay in the counting had jeopardised their teaching job because schools had already started and they have missed classes and were under pressure to return to schools.

- **Integrity of ballot papers:** A scrutineer for Salt raised a query on the same handwriting for all the first preferences and different handwriting for the second and third preferences in the 450 ballot papers for a certain ward in Karimui LLG. There was a big argument between the scrutineers from Karimui LLG and Salt-Nomane LLG. But at the end, all the scrutineers resolved to count because it happened everywhere in Karimui-Nomane.

- **Quality check (common errors with informal BPs):** During the quality checks, it was discovered that many ballot papers did not have the signature of the PO at the back of the ballot papers. These papers were removed and placed in the informal ballot boxes. Some contained regional candidates’ names and numbers and others showed signs of second markers which were also removed and placed in the informal ballot box.

- **Representation of counting officials:** All the counting officials were from Salt and Nomane LLGs. There was no Karimui LLG representatives as counting officials therefore the integrity of the counting officials was greatly questioned and highly scrutinised by the Karimui LLG scrutineers.

### 7.7 Findings and recommendations

Election in Karimui-Nomane was marred by illegal practices from bribery of voters to block and distributive voting by a handful of selected people to vote on behalf of the people. It was observed that most illegal practices were done in front of the security personnel who were over-powered by the people.

The illegal practices were not reported properly by the election officials and in certain instances, the illegal practices were taken as normal process of the election. This must be addressed going forward. The results clearly showed the voting pattern executed by all the three LLGs, as described below:

- **Salt LLG** distributed the votes among themselves because the Salt LLG candidates were among the hottest candidates in the electorate and most of them competed more than once so they had supporters in both Karimui and Nomane. A high percentage of them were in the race compared to Nomane and Karimui LLG plus they also had the highest population compared to Nomane LLG. Most of their preferences were still active (i.e. not exhausted) even when some of their candidates were eliminated. The first preferences were retained by the standing candidates but the second and third preferences were distributed to their alliances mostly in Salt LLG.

- **Similarly,** candidates from Nomane LLG shared their preferences among themselves. All the first preferences were retained within the ward’s candidates and the second and third preferences were also exchanged within their alliances in the Nomane LLG. Because the Nomane LLG population is low, compared to Salt and Karimui LLGs, most of their candidates were eliminated early in their ballots.

- **The Karimui LLG** people also retained their votes to some extent. Despite that, some candidates from Salt also collected votes from Karimui LLG.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for improving future elections:

- **Qualification of candidates:** There must be a piece of legislation from the eleventh Parliament to raise the level of qualification of candidates to at least a bachelor's degree or diploma as a prerequisite for candidates to contest in any election in PNG. Quality candidates is strongly believed to come from such a policy.

- **Electoral commissioners:** Election laws must change to include a team of commissioners in the PNGEC. Commissioners should consist of at least three or five members from different agencies such as the Attorney General, Ombudsman Commission, a private citizen from the Church Council or Business Council so that they can make inclusive decisions in the running of the elections. A single commissioner in the PNGEC has not worked for PNG.

- **Common Roll:** A regular Common Roll update is recommended to avoid future irregularities in the distribution of ballot papers to each ward.
• **Increase the presence of security personnel:** The current distribution of security personnel is over-powered by the locals. We need to increase the presence of security personnel in big numbers. The reservists are no longer required to safeguard the ballot papers as well as enforcing the electoral laws at the polling.

• **Electronic Electoral System (EES):** The introduction and implementation of the Electronic Electoral System (EES) is strongly recommended. The electronic roll (e-roll) and e-voting with the use of e-identity will at least reduce the irregularities of elections.

• **Strengthen Ward Record System (WRS):** The PNGEC should consult the DPLGA and the National Statistical Office (NSO) to establish a sound ward record system which can be used in the election. We need to have yearly updates on the WRS to inform the PNGEC of how many people are physically on the ground during the voting period. This will restrict the movement of people in the last minute from place to place as well as minimising ghost figures.

### 7.8 Conclusion

The laws that govern the statutes and functions of the PNGEC must be reviewed to give further effect to ensure it is very independent from any government or institution or organisation in the country. The 2022 NGE records many pre- and post-election related violence and that indicates incompetence in the planning of elections. The people considered elections as both threats and opportunities because election has a history of bringing destruction to some who do not manage it well while it brings good fortune to others. PNGEC, as the responsible body, must manage elections in the country properly and take all recommendations from the various observation reports in the country as policy guidelines and interventions for better election results in the future.
8.1 Background of Tambul-Nebilyer District/Electorate

Tambul-Nebilyer District is one of the four districts of WHP. Its capital is at Tambul Station. The population of the district is estimated at about 130,000. In the 2022 NGE, 104,889 ballot papers were distributed throughout the electorate. There are two LLGs: Nebilyer Rural LLG and Mt Giluwe Rural LLG.

People in the Tambul-Nebilyer electorate use the patrilineal system. The patrilineal system is a common kinship system in which an individual's family membership derives from and is recorded through their father's lineage. It generally involves the inheritance of property, rights, names, or titles by persons related through male kin. The men are the keepers of the land, they pay bride price for women, and they control and manage the community affairs.

The Tambul-Nebilyer people have access to power supply, clean water supply, good road links and bridges, primary schools and secondary schools, public transportation, mini shops, markets, communication networks like Digicel and Telikom, Police Station and health services within the district. With accessibility to these services the locals have become self-reliant in improving their lives by building permanent and semi-permanent houses. The Upper Nebilyer is located on the highway to Enga Province while the Lower Nebilyer is located on the highway to SHP.

The Nebilyer Valley was known for tribal fighting and this has had many side effects on the people living there. However, there is no more tribal fight and life in Nebilyer has returned to normalcy.

The district has abundant natural resources such as land and coffee and a variety of cash crops is produced. It also produces professional human resources and entrepreneurs.

Figure 6: Map of Tambul-Nebilyer District

Source: 2011 PNG National Population and Housing Census (NSO, 2013)

8.2 Political history of Tambul-Nebilyer Electorate

The Tambul-Nebilyer electorate is now 59 years old, 12 years older than PNG as an independent nation. The electorate has participated in 13 NGEs since 1963. While not many constituencies in the country were being formed and given political status, Tambul-Nebilyer was among the few in the Highlands region of PNG to send the first representatives into the House of Assembly.
According to the history of Tambul-Nebilyer, the late Sir Koitaga Mano was appointed by white kiaps to represent the Great Kaguel and Nebilyer Valley in 1963. Sir Koitaga, as a young energetic man had the privilege to represent his people in the colonial era. He worked as a translator and eventually went into the House of Assembly in Port Moresby before it became separated after self-government and independence. Sir Koitaga who was in his thirties, not only represented Tambul-Nebilyer but also represented two other electorates, SHP and Enga (known as districts at that time). He was also the only MP that represented his electorate for three terms (1963–67, 1967–71, 1971–75). In 2008, Sir Koitaga was knighted for his services in politics and the general growth of the nation.

Sir Koitaga represented his electorate for three successive terms before he lost the seat to Puluwe Mapike in 1975. Puluwe Makipe served from 1975–1982 and was unseated by Thomas Negints. Thomas Negints served from 1982–1992. In 1992, the late Vincent Auali (then Transport and Civil Aviation Minister) unseated Thomas Negints who was then Fisheries Minister and Minister assisting the Prime Minister. He served Tambul-Nebilyer from 1992–2002. Late Vincent Auali lost the seat in the 2002 NGE to late Mark Anis who served for only one term from 2002–2007 and lost to former Minister for Labour and Industrial Relations Minister, Benjamin Poponawa.

The late Benjamin Poponawa served two terms from 2007 to 2017 before he lost the seat to current MP and Vice Minister for Treasury Win Bakri Daki in 2017. In 2022, Hon Win Bakri Daki retained the seat as the MP for Tambul-Nebilyer and now serves as the Minister for Defence under the Marape-Rosso government.

8.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

In the 2022 NGE, 15 candidates nominated to contest the Tambul-Nebilyer Open electorate. Most candidates contested as independents while only five were endorsed by political parties. The background of the candidates ranged from high school leavers and self-employed businessmen to lawyers including a former chief of staff of the Prime Minister's office. Notable endorsed candidates include incumbent member Win Bakri Daki under the PANGU Pati; lawyer Paul Mawa under People Progress Party (PPP); Dr George Bopi under the PNC Party; and Henry Pora under the PNG National Party.

8.4 Observations of campaign

The candidates in Tambul-Nebilyer used many campaign strategies. The common ones were:

- **Posters:** Apart from placing posters on walls and other surfaces, most candidates also displayed posters on the full body of vehicles. These were eye-catching strategies as candidates moved from one place to another. Most posters were also displayed on the doors of houses and buildings in common places like Hagen town.

- **Huge banners and billboards:** These were also common strategies as candidates put up big banners and billboards at the junction or markets and most entrances into the district.

- **Vehicle campaign:** As is the case in for WHP, most candidates used truckloads of supporters in a convoy of more than five to 10 vehicles. to show their numbers. If you don’t use many vehicles, voters assume that you do not have a strong base of supporters.

- **Money power play:** Most candidates were giving out money to supporters to pay for funeral expenses, bride price and even money for the tribes to share among themselves to vote the candidate. Money is the single biggest player in Tambul-Nebilyer.

- **Campaign houses:** Candidates and supporters were kept all night singing “Waipa Waipa”, gambling or even consuming alcohol until daybreak. Campaign houses in Tambul-Nebilyer was the common gathering place for supporters to talk, discuss and strategise on how to vote.

- **Networking and alliances:** Candidates also built strong network and alliances with other candidates to share their second and third preferences of votes. The candidates even had their own regional candidates’ network for the WHP governor’s seat.

- **Support for services:** The people went freely to pledge their support to a candidate by bringing food (kaukau bags, bananas, rice bags, sugar bales, pigs, cows and even cash). In return, they demand services, and are given bus fares by the candidates to return home.

- **Professional connections:** Most candidates also established connections with former school mates, college mates, workmates and other professional affiliations to lure voters.

- **Campaign rallies:** A rally is one main gathering where candidates gather with their people to present their policies. At the rally, the candidates invite village chiefs, the LLG ward councillors, youth leaders, the Tambul-Nebilyer candidates and regional candidates to attend. During the rally, together they present their policies and plans to the people, and pledge support for each other in terms of exchanging the second preferential votes and their regional preferences as well.
8.5 Observations of polling

Polling day is crucial for all the villagers and candidates as after casting their votes, there will be no more campaign, no feasting and no more noise. Some of the observations at the polling are as follows:

- **Two lines for voting**: Following the new directions from PNGEC, two lines were formed to cast votes. One line for males and a separate line for females.
- **Security personnel**: There were less than three security personnel in most of the polling stations observed.
- **Consented community block voting**: Where candidates contested, people allowed few elites to mark all their ballots for their candidate and second and third preferences were also marked according to the community’s choice of candidates.
- **Killing**: Four people were killed during the polling at the Tomba Bridge. According to Police, one died instantly after being shot, two others jumped off the bridge with bullet wounds and the other died on arrival at the Mt Hagen General Hospital.
- **General behaviour**: People behaved well during the polling. There were not many activities going on during the polling.

8.6 Observations of counting and declaration

After much deliberation, the counting for the WHP electorates commenced on 23 July 2022:

- The Hagen Open electorate and the WHP Regional seat were the first two seats to be counted in the counting centre at Kimininga Police Barracks.
- The security forces allowed two scrutineers per candidate; that is for the regional and open seats. The media personnel and election observers, both domestic and international, were allowed to go in and to report and observe the counting. The media team, observers, and the scrutineers were only allowed to carry less than K100 into the counting centre.
- The total allowable ballot papers were 104,889. The exhausted ballot papers were 27,014 and the total ballot papers were reduced to 77,875. The absolute majority was reduced to 38,938.
- The incumbent member Win Dakri of PANGU Pati scored 41,508 votes after exclusion 13 of candidate James Steven Kennedy, to retain the seat. The runner-up was lawyer Paul Mawa of PPP with 20,798 votes.
- Declaration was made on 5 August 2022 witnessed by the Provincial Election Steering Committee.

8.7 Findings and recommendations

- The National Household Census and the Common Roll must be updated to determine the number of eligible voters for 2027 NGE. Ballot papers must be printed according to the updated Common Roll.
- Recruit locals and allow them to provide additional usher roles or security roles.
- Distribution of ballot boxes must be made by the security forces only.
- Recruit students from tertiary institutions to count the ballot papers.
- The government needs to make more funding available on time for future elections.
- The logistics coordination of the election must be given to the security personnel.

8.8 Conclusion

The 2022 NGE for Tambul-Nebilyer was good except for the brutal killing of the four people who were suspected of carrying marked ballot papers. The general concern was on the outdated Common Roll and the unfair distribution of ballot papers. At all the polling stations, voters observed election laws and voted by joining the lines of males and females respectively. In a few polling stations where they had candidates contesting, the community leader consented with a few people to vote for their candidates and allowed their second and third preferences to be swapped with other candidates whom they supported.
9. Wapenamanda Open observation report
Observers: William Kipongi and Maria Maliam

9.1 Background of Wapenamanda District/Electorate

Wapenamanda District is one of the six districts in the Enga Province. The other five districts are: Wabag, Kompim-Ambun, Lagaip, Porgera-Paiela, and Kandep. Wapenamanda District is located in the southeast of the province and shares provincial borders with WHP and SHP. The district is the first district in the province when you travel from WHP into Enga Province. Wapenamanda is divided into two LLGs, Tsak LLG and Wapenamanda Rural LLG. The township of Wapenamanda is located just along the Highlands Highway and the entire township lies within the boundaries of one of the major tribes called the Yakuman tribe. Wapenamanda is the gateway to Enga as it also hosts the domestic airport for Enga Province.

Wapenamanda is known as the food and economic hub for the entire province. It has a coffee factory, meat factory, fuel stations, honey farm, cattle farm, coffee plantations, and so on. The district has an arable land and road access to the Highlands Highway. The district has the oldest health facility, the Mabishanda Lutheran Health Centre, which is still serving people from all over the province. It has the airport, providing services to the entire province. The district has three secondary schools and a number of high schools, primary schools, and technical colleges and one international school. Figure 7: Map of Wapenamanda District

Source: 2011 PNG National Population and Housing Census (NSO, 2013)

9.2 Political history of Wapenamanda Electorate

Enga Province was colonised by Australia in the early 1940s, where the initial settlement was in the area now known as the township of Wapenamanda. Businesses, farms, factories, and so on were set up and landowners were paid salt, axes, and other food stuff to occupy the land (now the township of Wapenamanda). Catholic and Lutheran missionaries arrived in 1947, and a few years later the Seventh Day Adventists. They set up schools, health centres, hydro power systems, farms, built roads, bridges, and so on. They were seen as the second arm of the government in their contribution towards the physical development of the place as well as human resource development. Wapenamanda has some of the oldest institutions in the province like Mabishanda Lutheran Health Centre, Timin Hydro Power Station, Wapenamanda Coffee Factory, Pausa High School (now secondary), Amapiyaka International School, and many more. Some of these facilities are not functional now but most of them have survived and are still operating. Most of these facilities were well established before Enga separated from the WHP provincial administration in 1978 and became a province.
During the colonial era, when Enga was under WHP, the colonial administration appointed some traditional leaders (tultuls and luluais) from Wapenamanda who travelled the province with the provincial administration. Prominent people like Yoponda Kepa, Tipitape Kaepae and Leme Iangalio worked closely with the colonial administration in those days. Leme Iangalio, a former luluai from the Yakuman tribe was appointed to represent the people of Wapenamanda in the first House of Assembly. Back then, Wapenamanda was still under the WHP administration.

In the 1968 National Assembly Election, Pato Kakaraya (now Sir Pato Kakaraya) ousted Leme Iangalio. Sir Kakaraya served for three terms as the member for Wapenamanda. During his term in 1978 Enga Province was separated from WHP. Pato Kakaraya was then ousted by Masket Iangalio in the 1982 NGE. Masket Iangalio is heir of Leme Iangalio, the former MP. He served for three terms and was ousted by Miki Kaeok in the 1997 NGE. Miki Kaeok also served for three terms and was ousted by Rimbink Pato in the 2012 NGE. Hon. Rimbink Pato served two terms and was ousted by Miki Kaeok, a former MP, in the 2022 NGE.

9.3 Candidates, political party endorsements and alliances

In the 2022 NGE, a total of 19 candidates nominated to contest the Wapenamanda seat. The candidates were mostly self-employed businessmen and have reached either high school or university level. The ousted member Rimbink Pato is a lawyer. Most candidates contested as independents. Notable party-endorsed candidates include Rimbink Pato (leader of the United Party), Miki Kaeok (PANGU Pati), Augustine Erepa (People’s Party) and John Tuink (PNG Party).

9.4 Observations of campaign

Observations of campaign are listed as follows:

- **Campaign visitation:** Family to family visit programs were initiated by individual candidates’ campaign managers for the candidate to visit each family with a small delegate to secure votes.
- **Supply money and goods:** Candidates supplied money and goods to supporters to put up campaign rallies for them. The candidate then invited his supporters from other areas to impress upon and show the other candidates that he has support everywhere.
- **Political rallies:** Candidates also invited other candidates whom they collaborated with to exchange votes and also to give speeches and show that this candidate also has support everywhere.
- **Campaign houses:** Candidates set up campaign houses along the roads and public areas to claim ownership of the area and also to show that he has secured votes in that area. His supporters from other areas were allowed to stay there.
- **Invitation:** One candidate openly invited anyone who needed money to his house, and he gave them money; any amount they asked for.
- **Money, money, money and Mr Money:** Another candidate threw away money at the public places for anyone to grab, when they called him Mr Money, especially when he drove passed them along the road. One time he threw out K500, wrapped in bundles of K20 notes. Everyone rushed to collect the money. Someone was almost run over by an oncoming vehicle.
- **Clan coordinators:** Most candidates appoint individuals from each clan to make a list of eligible voters and pay them K100 each. We saw many candidates doing this.
- **Support from candidates:** Some supporters said that they wanted to cast their votes to candidates who support them pay their medical bills, school fee for their children, plane tickets home, or assist in repatriating a body from Port Moresby to home for burial.
- **Feasting time:** There was a lot of feasting going on everywhere (birthday, wedding, funeral, etc.), and the candidates whom they support were invited. It could be just the family members, or the community, or sometimes the whole clan or the tribe hosting the feasts.
- **Compensation and reconciliation:** Campaign coincided with events like bride price, compensation, and reconciliation.
- **Vehicle for campaign:** Vehicles carrying candidates’ supporters were overloaded; some even sitting on the roof top or on the bonnet and yet these vehicles were running at top speed. Everyone is on the road and truck loads of people were seen moving up and down the roads.
- **Campaign house for lease:** A supporter of a candidate leased his campaign house to other candidates because his candidate did not visit him for some time.
- **Voters’ behaviours:** Voters pulled out from one candidate and went to support another if the candidate did not give them money or visit them.
- **Weapons:** Voters were carrying guns and bush knives around in the public places and even in the towns.
- **Security personnel during campaign period:** There was no security personnel (police) to control the public during the campaign period. People started attacking each other when a fight or argument rose among supporters of candidates.
Public safety was not guaranteed. There was literally no safety and security guaranteed to the public because security operations were absent during the campaign period.

- **Churches:** Some churches were practically empty as most Christians were busy campaigning and rarely attended church services.
- **Campaign chants:** Songs were composed and sung asking for votes, praising candidates, or revealing secrets about their candidate winning, or sometimes undermining other candidates.

**Purpose of a campaign house (activities inside)**

- Campaign houses were built along the road, which became hotspot zones for gambling, marketing, dancing and singing, courtship for youths, and places where a candidate came to meet his supporters.
- Gambling and marketing seemed to be the most common activities seen nearly in all the campaign houses every day.
- Youths drinking beer and homebrew in the campaign houses were normal. They danced until day break. In the nights, everyone flocked into the campaign houses, telling stories, courting, dancing, and even extra marital relationships were common during campaign. Campaign houses were also referred to as “animal houses” because of the kind of behaviour people saw in the campaign houses.
- Campaign house became a pickup and drop off spot for supporters of a particular candidate to which the campaign house is dedicated to.
- This is also a place for supporters meeting with the candidate, sharing food, money and so on.
- The campaign house becomes the symbol of the presence of the candidate in an area or in a tribe, and it also shows to the public that this candidate has votes in this place.
- In one campaign house, three primary school children were chopped into pieces. The relatives set a roadblock and demanded those involved to surrender. The case is still pending.
- Someone who built a campaign house with money and materials provided by a candidate said, “this is a good opportunity for me to build a campaign house for my candidate but after the campaign, this will be my family house”. Some people take the advantage to accomplish something they can benefit from for the longer term.

**Campaign rallies**

Campaign rallies were organised in order to gather the people so the candidate will talk to the people of his intention and plans to contest the election:

- **Costs:** There is a lot of resources and money used to host a single campaign rally. When a candidate hosts a campaign rally in a particular place he sends vehicles to all the districts bringing all his supporters to attend the rally. He wants others to see the numbers he has and also the support he got from all the districts.
- **Singing:** As they approach the rally arena, supporters form groups and sing paying tribute to the candidate and the tribe or community hosting the rally.
- **Night rally:** In a campaign rally one night, someone shot two boys with a gun and then escaped. The person was not identified as it was night but later they heard that the enemy tribe came to attack them while they were busy entertaining the people during the rally.
- **Feasting:** In some rallies, more than 50 pigs were slaughtered and more than 100 cartons of coke was distributed. Garden food like banana, sugarcane, taro, pineapple and so on were plentiful and seemed to never run out in several campaign rallies that we witnessed.
- **Rally committees:** Each candidate had a special committee that presented the budget for the rally which included funds for traditional costumes and dressings, transport, food and drinks and many more. The candidate then provides the funds as per the budget presented.
- **Grandstand/stage:** The candidate also pays for decorating and set up of the grandstand. He then transports them back to where they came from. It is an expensive exercise to host just one campaign rally.

**Problems and conflicts observed during campaign**

- **Verbal arguments/debates:** Supporters of rival candidates argued with each other in defending their candidate and protecting their voters.
- **In fighting:** Some families fight and argue over which candidate to support especially when the wife supports one candidate and the husband another.
- **Family feuds:** When someone switches support for one candidate to another, the relatives and friends argue and sometimes the person is beaten up.
- **Substance abuse:** Many young boys and girls attending primary and high schools were seen drinking homebrew and alcohol and engaged in prostitution.
Vehicle accidents: We witnessed two car accidents. In one, a guy fell off an overloaded car which was travelling at high speed and was injured with broken bones to his legs and hands. In the other accident, a drunk driver knocked off a young man standing at the side of the road while speeding in a crowded public area.

Injuries: A supporter of one candidate shot a boy on the leg with a shot gun because he supported another candidate.

Fake names: Some people made a list of fake names, brought it to one candidate and asked him for money to buy their first votes. After they got money from that candidate, they went to the next candidate and did the same thing. Such practice provoked many conflicts and ignited arguments in the community once they were caught and identified.

Security issues: There was a need for security personnel to control the crowd and the movement of people during the campaign period.

The role of media in the National General Election

The role of the media is vital in the dissemination of community local news to highlight happenings around the country:

- The media was seen as a threat and not being helpful to people for a better election outcome.
- A woman interviewed by NBC was heard speaking about the bad behaviour of youths at the polling area. The community mobilised and went to confront her at her house but fortunately she escaped.
- It is risky to condemn the behaviour of the people of a community in the media. They directly assault and harass the person with questions like: “Why did you say that? What if the police come and arrest us? Why are you telling them we are like this and that?” Many issues arose when someone expressed their opinion about the election in the media.
- People don’t understand the role of the media in the national elections.

9.5 Observations of polling

- Block and control voting: In all the polling booths we visited, we did not see people standing in line to cast their votes. Instead they were seated and only a few people were seen marking the ballot papers and casting the votes for them. In polling areas where someone from that area is contesting the open or regional seat, the PO was told to sign all the papers, then one person was asked to cast all the primary votes for that candidate. The second and third preference votes were then distributed to other candidates. In polling areas where two candidates from that area were contesting, they divided the ballot papers in half and then marked the primary votes for each candidate. The second and third preference votes were then shared or casted for other candidates.

- Distributive voting (DV): One polling area had 3,000 eligible voters but was only given 1,650 ballot papers. The community leader told the people that the ballot papers will be distributed equally to their candidates. The PO then signed all the ballot papers and distributed to the scrutineers of each candidate to mark. The following was observed in other polling areas we visited:
  - The ballot papers were distributed to the eligible voters and they asked one person to mark all of them;
  - ballot papers were distributed among clans and they then gave them to supporters of candidates to cast their votes;
  - ballot papers were distributed and one group marked theirs in a trade store while another group marked theirs in a vehicle;
  - people ordered the POs to sign all the papers and then the leaders distributed them.
  - where no one from a particular area contested for the open or regional seat, the leaders agreed to distribute the ballot papers equally among the other candidates after the PO had signed the papers; and
  - people divided the ballot papers equally among the clans or tribes that casted their votes in one polling area.
- When we asked why they were distributing ballot papers, they said it was the only way to minimise problems, because if they rely on the Common Roll, many eligible voters will not find their names on the Common Roll. The number of ballot papers allocated will not cater for the eligible voters. This will only ignite conflicts and voting will be problematic. The normal process of polling was not seen in any of the polling areas we visited. The PNGEC must address this problem by updating the Common Roll.

- Defective or out of date Common Roll: Because many are not on the Common Roll people do not want to use the Common Roll to vote. So, to avoid problems, they distribute the papers equally among the candidates, or among the different clans or even to families who have a big number of voters.

- Absence of security personnel: The security personnel were not present at all the seven pooling areas that we visited.

- Threats and intimidation: In one polling area, a group of youths with bush knives threatened people, took the ballot papers and the ballot box to a nearby bush and marked all the papers. In two polling areas, supporters of a candidate
threatened the people with guns and cast all the first and second preference votes.

- **Trading of ballot papers:** A group of people was seen handing out cash to those who had the ballot papers so that they will cast the second preference votes for them. This was seen in all the polling areas.

### Conflict and security concerns at polling

- No security personnel was present during the campaign period right up to polling. People were carrying guns and bush knives around, even during polling.
- Vehicles’ overload caused accidents claiming some innocent lives. If the Police and Defence Force patrolled the roads during campaign and polling, the problems would be minimised.
- The youths and those who got the ballot papers by force and cast votes deprived the rights of people to vote.
- In one polling area, drunk youths arrived with bush knives and grabbed all the ballot papers by force and cast votes for the candidates of their choice. This kind of behaviour almost provoked conflict and violence but people were able to control the situation without the presence of the security personnel.
- No security check points were set up to check the movement of people and if they were carrying with them bush knives or other weapons. They were carrying them around freely and did anything they wished, anytime and anywhere.
- Someone who had received money from several candidates and promised to cast them his/her primary vote (i.e. first preference) was assaulted by the candidates’ supporters and demanded him/her to refund their money.
- When ballot papers were distributed, candidates with the bigger number of supporters seemed to overpower those with less numbers. Sometimes they used their manpower to grab more ballot papers for their team.
- One ballot box with votes was kept in a village until late in the evening and then supporters of a particular candidate transported it to the district office.
- All the ballot boxes for the district were transported to Wabag town for counting.

### 9.6 Observations of counting and declaration

The following are records of counting observations for Wapenamanda:

- The counting venue was changed. The RO said counting will be in Jiwaka for all the districts in Enga Province. All the ballot boxes for the other districts were brought to Jiwaka except the Wapenamanda boxes which were left at Wabag for counting at Wabag town primary school.
- Three rooms were set up. Two for the open seat (Tsak and Wapenamanda Rural LLGs) and one for the regional seat.
- No roadblock was set up by the security personnel. People were seen carrying guns and bush knives into Wabag town.
- When the RO called for the ballot box, the PO came forward, read the serial number for the inner and outer code of the box to confirm that it is the same tag number that was issued and that this is the same box that had come back for counting. If confirmed, then the box was presented to the counting officials to count. He then did the same to the ballot box for the regional seat.
- The counting officials counted the first preference votes, repacked them and placed them in the box with a new tag.
- There was heavy Police and Defence Force presence inside and outside the counting room. But it is interesting to note that the security personnel were involved in the counting too. When the scrutineers of candidates argued over an informal vote or any miscalculation of numbers, the security personnel forced them to stop arguing and allow counting to continue.
- The Police and Defence Force personnel played two roles at the counting room. One as security personnel and the other as counting officials. This shows that they were illegally involved in the electoral process which is not right.
- The scrutineers were not given the opportunity to their rights and freedom to express their opinion where a ballot paper was considered informal or whether there were some irregularities in the number of ballot papers in a box. For example, a scrutineer complained that the number of eligible voters did not match the number of ballot papers in a box that was presented to be counted. He argued that the total eligible voters in that council ward was less than 1,000 but there was a total of 1,800 ballot papers in that particular ballot box to be counted, which was the number of ballot papers given to that area before the polling. When discussions on these issues took a long time to resolve, the security personnel intervened and forced counting to commence, telling the scrutineers that the matter should be addressed during the pre-count.
- The counting officials complained of non-payment of their allowances and would leave, disrupting counting, to look for food and then return to count. Counting for just one district, Wapenamanda, took more than a week (20–30 July) to complete.
Informal votes and other issues noticed at the counting

The following are some observations with regards to informal votes:

- Some informal votes are: ballot papers not signed by the PO; voter makes two marks against a candidate’s name on the ballot paper; ballot paper signed by the PO but not marked by the voter; paper marked by voter but not clear because was either erased or scratched and marked again; and so on. These are some discrepancies considered as informal votes.

- One ballot box disputed was the Tapend box because when police arrived at that polling area, they witnessed that people took the box somewhere and cast their votes.

- A ballot box can also be disputed if the serial number is changed from the original number given when boxes and ballot papers were distributed for polling.

- In one box, there were 30 ballot papers casted to a particular candidate but these papers were not signed by the PO. They called the PO to explain but he escaped. The RO asked the scrutineers to take note and proceed with the counting.

- After the third day of counting, supporters of one candidate killed a man who supported another candidate causing tensions to rise.

- Tension worsened when two other supporters were also assaulted and received bush knife wounds.

- Counting was suspended for a couple of days.

Declaration

- After the primary count, the RO refused to accept Ward 28 Tapend box as some security personnel (the Police) complained that the box was hijacked. Counting was suspended and the matter was reported to PNGEC by the Election Manager for Enga. The PNGEC directed the RO to proceed with the counting of Tapend box, but the RO refused because of Police interference. Soon after receiving a letter from the PNGEC directing the RO to proceed with the counting, another letter, also with the PNGEC stamp, signature and letterhead, gave directions to stop counting of the Tapend box. However, this letter was forged. The counting was further suspended because the Police insisted strongly not to allow counting of the Tapend box.

- The counting official proceeded with the second preference count without the Tapend box.

- After the second count, Miki Kaeok was in the lead with 29,256 votes (higher than the absolute majority 25,973). Behind him was the incumbent MP, Hon Rimbink Pato with 22,692 votes and Danny Terep Kati was third with 16,636 votes.

- Miki Kaeok was declared the winner on 31 July by the RO and signed his writs. However, PNGEC refused to accept his writs because the RO failed to comply with PNGEC's directives to count the Tapend box. PNGEC asked for a written explanation to why the RO refused the order. The RO wrote back to PNGEC with his explanation. PNGEC then accepted Hon Miki Kaeok's writs and formally declared him the member-elect for Wapenamanda Open seat.

9.7 Findings and recommendations

Almost 80 percent of the eligible voters in Wapenamanda did not cast their votes as polling booths were controlled by youths, drunkards, youths with guns and bush knives and some leaders taking charge of polling. Many people saw their vote as a commodity which they could trade with money or gift from the candidates or whoever they got support from. No one understood the importance of the NGE. Most people were ignorant because of selfishness and greed.

A good number of people voted for the candidate who said, “When I am in power, I will distribute cash and you all will have a lot of money”, to which the people clapped wholeheartedly. The majority of voters valued the first preference vote and spoke much on it but not the second and third preference vote.

Furthermore, only a select few cast on behalf of all the voters while 90 percent looked on doing nothing. Election awareness or perhaps a different way of conducting the NGE will enable the people to exercise their freedom to vote. Illiterate people were misled by others' stories about the election.

Most people in Enga regarded the 2022 NGE as a war between Peoples’ Party (Sir Ipatas) and Liberal Party (Sir Pundari). People asked themselves why Pundari is campaigning against Ipatas and why Ipatas is campaigning against Pundari as one is contesting the open seat and the other the regional seat.

Political parties are identified with individuals who have a good or bad reputation in government. Those who did not like the leader of PANGU Pati did not want to vote for the PANGU Pati candidates. Likewise, those who disliked the leader of the PNC Party did not want to vote for PNC Party candidates. However, generally, voting for parties did not matter much in Wapenamanda. The bulk of the population voted for who they know and who helped them, not from which party they were with.
The Election Manager (EM), Returning Officer (RO) and Presiding Officers (PO) seemed not well acquainted with their duties and as a result, most decisions were dictated by the security personnel. When the ballot boxes for Wapenamanda arrived at about 9:30am from Wabag for the polling, the candidates called for suspension of polling for the day and asked the RO to train the POs first.

When the candidates and supporters questioned the District Administrator about the late delivery of ballot boxes and papers, he referred the question to the RO and then the RO to the Election Manager. The Election Manager couldn’t answer the question but said he will talk to the Electoral Commissioner. Everything seemed to be arranged at the last minute causing many logistics issues in this election.

The final list of POs names came out on the day of polling before the ballot boxes were taken to the polling sites. Thus, the candidates and supporters called for postponement of polling to the next day. The POs had three in-house trainings that day before they were sent out with the ballot boxes the next day for polling. This was all rushed.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are drawn from the election observations in Wapenamanda Open electorate in the 2022 NGE:

- The Common Roll update is very important. This should be done by a bottom-up approach in order to be precise. That is, let the councillors and church pastors do the updates in order to avoid inflating numbers by supporters of candidates.
- There is a great need to update and upgrade the election process to make it more efficient and effective.
- The NID system should be used in the 2027 NGE in order to resolve many election-related problems and issues.
- Invite foreign police and defence personnel (perhaps Australia & New Zealand) to supervise polling and counting. There are lots of problems seen at polling and counting.
- Do away with campaign rallies; arrange certain days for candidate’s policy presentation.
- Prepare the security personnel well so that they carry out their duties to avert overloading of vehicles, crowd moving from one place to another and punish those carrying weapons around in public places.

**9.8 Conclusion**

The election in Wapenamanda electorate was marred with violence and rowdy feastings. Candidates were seen as ‘walking money’ and voters used the occasion to feast on free food and drinks. The campaign period for the electorate was the period of feasting and partying. The polling was rigged by a few people through block and control voting, swapping of preferences for their candidates and distributive voting where votes were shared among the people by sub clans to mark their candidates. The security personnel on the ground were outnumbered and overpowered by the locals. People could not vote by their name because the Common Roll was defective and outdated. In some polling places, there were more ballot papers than voters while in other polling places there were less ballot papers than the actual number of people. This led to confusion and violence among the supporters and voters. There was widespread threats and intimidation by candidates and supporters towards the voters on the polling day. Therefore, the community to control of the situation by block voting where candidates and others resorted to sharing and apply distributive voting so as to contain their peace. PNGEC should provide more security and update the Common Roll to run elections in future.
PART C: Key findings, recommendations and conclusion

10. Key Findings

This part presents the key findings and recommendations of the study. The findings are arranged under campaign strategies, polling, and counting and declaration.

10.1 Key findings on campaign strategies

The common campaign strategies observed are as follows:

- **Alliances**: Professional and political party alliances and network were common. Alliances were observed in the form of tribal alliances or alliances along segregated areas of the electorates especially in light of the Limited Preferential Voting (LPV) system. That is, candidates aligned themselves with other candidates to share their second and third preferences of votes.
- **Collaboration of candidates**: Candidates collaborated with other candidates from other villages, tribes and areas to maximise their chances of winning, considering the LPV system being used.
- **Feasting**: Food and drinks were distributed at all campaign gatherings.
- **Invitations**: Invited candidates gave money to the coordinators of the host candidates’ (campaign houses) for the upkeep of their campaign houses.
- **Merchandise**: Posters, banners, billboards, stickers on vehicles, T-shirts and caps were used by candidates and their parties.
- **Public rallies**: Hosting rallies was a common campaign strategy. Candidates attended and spoke at rallies organised by their coordinators or generally as an avenue for public dissemination of their policies. Different rival candidates hosted gatherings or rallies entertaining huge crowds. People came in groups performing traditional dances expressing moral and numerical support for the candidate.
- **Social media**: Social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were actively used during campaign. This was considering the rollout of ICT infrastructure particularly by Digicel.
- **Party politics**: It was observed that campaigning was dominated by the PNC Party and PANGU Pati, leaving little to no room for other political parties.
- **Political party colours**: Colours were a common campaign strategy to instil a sense of belonging or support to a particular party or candidate. For example, PNC Party was recognised by red-coloured merchandise while PANGU Pati was recognised by the green colour.
- **Money power**: During campaigns, money power was evident. Generally, it was observed that candidates with more money were becoming more popular and powerful than those who had less money.
- **Campaign houses**: Candidates organised campaign houses to entertain people. Feasts and social activities were organised as part of the entertainment. Candidates were competing to put up campaign houses along the roads and public areas to show that this was their territory and that they have votes from that area.
- **Hausman turned into campaign houses**: Hausman is a big house specifically designed to accommodate only males belonging to a particular clan but in the election, they served as the house of meetings for candidates and their supporters.
- **Nere-Tere (Take and Give)**: Nere-Tere or Kaikai na Givim (Tok Pisin) and ‘Take and Give’ is a factor for voters.
- **Pre-polling intimidation and threats**: High powered rifles were carried around openly by supporters and clan members of candidates.
- **Vehicle campaign**: Candidates used convoy of vehicles with full load of supporters to show their numbers.
- **Visitation to families**: Family to family visit programs were initiated by individual candidates’ campaign managers for the candidate to visit each family with a small delegation to secure votes.
- **Clan coordinators**: Most candidates appointed individuals from each clan to make lists of eligible voters and pay them K100 each.
- **Use of campaign period to settle obligations**: The campaign period was also used to settle traditional obligations such as bride price and reconciliations.
- **Use of songs and chants**: Songs and chants were common during the campaign period to drive the message for candidates and parties.
10.2 Key findings on polling observation

The key findings from observations on polling are:

- **Block voting**: Block voting for convenience and to settle tensions (cooperative voting) was evident. A few people marked ballot papers on behalf of a group. This goes against the democratic principle of “one person one vote” although it may be convenient for the tribe and perhaps the candidates.

- **Common Roll issues**: Perhaps the most disappointing part of polling was when voters did not find their names on the Common Roll; that is, a defective Common Roll. Because of the defective Common Roll, community leaders took control of the voting. This brings into question the role of PNGEC in updating the Common Roll.

- **Compromising of voting material**: Allocated or serialised ballot papers for specified polling locations was not delivered to those locations.

- **Disruption of voting**: Disagreements over voting arrangements led to destruction of polling booths at several polling places.

- **Distributive voting (DV)**: Ballot papers were distributed to the candidates.

- **Double voting**: Double voting occurs when one person votes more than once. People voted on behalf of other family members in absentia. This practice was evident.

- **Duplication of names**: In some instances, there were duplication of names on the Common Roll.

- **Lack of impartiality by polling officials**: In one instance, the PO made a speech to convince people to vote for the incumbent governor and also member for Goroka. POs are supposed to be neutral persons.

- **Lack of security for polling officials**: Polling officials had to flee for their safety, leaving the people to mark the ballot papers in their absence. This brings into question the adequacy of the security logistics.

- **Late and slow polling**: Polling generally started late and progressed slowly in most areas. This was due to polling officials not being on time.

- **No marking of names on Common Roll and non-use of inedible ink**: In many instances, polling officials did not mark names off the Common Roll, nor used the inedible ink.

- **Security issues**: In most polling stations, there was coercion and intimidation to which the security personnel had little control over.

- **Sharing of extra ballot papers**: Extra ballot papers were shared among certain candidates to finish all the ballot papers.

- **Threats and intimidation**: In certain instances, groups of youths threatened the people and marked the ballot papers. In other instances, the polling area was highly volatile as supporters of candidates were trying to exert their power to get votes from the voters.

- **Two lines for voting**: Following the new directions from PNGEC, two lines were to be formed for voting; one for males and another for females. This was a positive observation. However, whether voters followed these lines is another matter.

10.3 Key findings on counting and declaration

The key findings on counting and declaration observations are as follows:

- **Control by security forces**: The gate control by security forces was evident in all counting venues, which is a positive observation. However, some scrutineers were denied access.

- **Counting delays**: There were delays in counting due to disputes over the status of the tampered ballot boxes.

- **Counting officials**: Most polling and counting officials were teachers, making counting easy.

- **Delay in payments for counting officials**: Counting was suspended unnecessarily because of the delayed or non-payment of the counting officials allowances which prolonged counting.

- **Discrepancy between number of votes and number of eligible voters as per Common Roll**: There were more ballot papers than the numbers on the Common Roll.

- **Double infringements issues**: Ballot papers marked elsewhere outside of polling station and by few persons and non-eligible voters, were admitted for counting.

- **Evidence of block voting (BV)**: When a candidate from a certain village/tribe was eliminated, his second preferences were distributed to a candidate from his area (vote by popularity), which is evidence of block voting.

- **Evidence of voting along LLGs**: Candidates scored well in their LLG but did not receive many votes from the other LLGs, particularly for primary votes.
• *Media and observers allowed into counting venues:* The media personnel and election observers (both domestic and international) were allowed into counting rooms to observe the counting, which is a positive observation.

• *Names and numbers not matching:* Some of the marked ballot papers had numbers and names not corresponding.

• *Quality check (common errors with informal ballot papers):* Many ballot papers did not have the signature of the PO at the back of the ballot papers.

• *Representation of counting officials:* Tensions were caused when certain LLGs were not represented as counting officials.

• *Swapping of preferences (SOP):* Where there were two candidates contesting from the same area, the villagers agreed on sharing of the initial primary votes and swapping the second preference (Swapping Preference in Block Voting).

• *Time constraints:* Due to time limitations, ROs and the PNGEC were forced not to entertain scrutineers’ objections and disputes on the ballot boxes. Therefore, the scrutineers’ rights and freedom to express their opinion were denied.
11. Main recommendations

After consolidating all the reports from the six electorates, the following recommendations are suggested to improve elections in the future for PNG.

11.1 Need for political party endorsed candidates at all levels of government

The Office of the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPPCC) has done a lot of work with regards to political parties. In recent years, political party officers were even sponsored by IPPCC to attend trainings in partnership with the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as part of mentoring. IPPCC and PNG NRI also hosted a Political Parties’ Policies Seminar Series in 2021. However, the number of independent candidates across the country is very high. Many political parties did not endorse candidates in many electorates. One main objective of political parties is to contest in the elections. IPPCC and PNGEC should work together to ensure that all political parties must endorse candidates across the country including a fair number of female candidates. They must have representation in all the provinces and endorse as many candidates as possible.

11.2 State assets should not be used to entice voters

The sitting members of the electorate were seen using the district’s assets including DSIP during the campaign. All state assets should be removed from the possession of the sitting members and taken to the district’s headquarters for safe keeping for use by the new elected members. DSIP and PSIP funds and state assets such as vehicles, office equipment and payment of government funds by MPs should cease nine months before the Issue of Writs.

11.3 Address inducements and threats from other provinces

There were certain issues happening in other electorates that impacted on the conduct of elections in other provinces. For example, polling in Hela on 4 July and the declaration of MPs even before voting in other Highlands provinces had negative impact on voters. Also, illegal marking of ballot papers in Hela and SHP appeared on various media so people in other provinces decided to do the same in block voting and marking of ballot papers outside of the designated polling stations.

Further, the security personnel that were deployed to other Highlands provinces were told not to do anything as they were the same personnel moved from Hela and SHP. The security personnel should be deployed and utilised fully instead of presenting themselves in uniform and driving expensive vehicles but not being able to prevent illegal practices, especially illegal voting and sharing of preferences with threat and inducements.

It is recommended that polling in the Highlands region should start from the province with the highest number of seats (EHP), then to Simbu (7 seats), Jiwaka (4 seats) and WHP (5 seats), and then Enga, SHP and Hela. However, in a best-case scenario, all provinces should go into the polls on the same day.

11.4 Dates and schedules must not be changed unnecessarily

Continuous shifting of dates in any election like the 2022 NGE must be discouraged as the shifting dates confuses the people and can create chaos for election planning and operations. Polling teams must be sent out on time and should arrive at the scheduled polling station in time to conduct voting.

11.5 Engage only permanent public servants as election officials

All ROs, AROs and POs must be permanent public servants. Under the Public Service (Management) Act, public servants are responsible for the conduct of elections and any allegations of impropriety including criminal prosecution and sentencing can result in disciplinary action by the employer.

The PNGEC has looked elsewhere and recruited casual staff who have no career to protect nor entitlements to save in the event a disciplinary action arose. These casual polling officers have no standing in the community. In the past, teachers, district officers and kiaps were involved, and the communities had much respect for them.

Therefore, all polling officials must be permanent public servants delivering the Polling Journal which certifies that the elections were conducted in secret ballot, names of voters marked off the Common Roll and the indelible ink used, ballots deposited in the ballot box within the prescribed polling station and no votes were marked elsewhere and brought in. The declaration must not be signed if there is evidence that is contrary to the rules and regulations. If the polling official is a public servant and is found guilty, then he/she should be terminated immediately and charged. If criminal allegations lead to conviction, then all accumulated final entitlements are forfeited to the state.

11.6 Need for use of proper and legal names for villages, streets, clans and tribes

All polling station names should only be those recognised under the Names Act. All polling stations should be conducted at the gazetted names in the Common Roll. In many instances, the current Common Roll does not have names of polling
stations that people know about, or the names seem foreign to the local area. For example, in Goroka, names like Christopher Field, Saitens Residence or Triton Store were used, which are names that do not exist in law or relate to clans and villages. In Daulo electorate, ballot papers from Numbia Plantation were shifted to Mando near Obihaka Plantation and people had to vote there as the ballot papers were already brought in. Hijacking and rigging of ballot boxes were apparent in many electorates in the Highlands region as proper and legal names of places and clans were not used.

The Common Roll with every person in a Ward area listed under alphabetical order is time consuming and subject to misuse or abuse. For example, a person from a village in another ward can vote in another village. For example, the Common Roll for Nokondi Ward 3, Mimanalo LLG should list the eight villages and each clan and start with names of clan leaders and their family and flow down to others. The Common Roll should have names listed under the family unit. For example, Nomane LLG Ward 4, Kolu Rest House, Habaihou Village, Kaupa’s Family, then list all of Kaupa’s family members. The current Common Roll with alphabetical listing places family names all over the roll.

11.7 Common Roll must be updated and verified with penalty for default

The defective and outdated Common Roll must be updated and verified by NID or verified by Village Court officials, councillors, pastors and village recorders who will be penalised if the Common Roll exceeds the Census or if names of those on NID does not show on the Common Roll. Further, the Common Roll must have names listed in wards, villages, polling stations, clans and family and not have names listed in alphabetical order for the whole ward, rendering the Common Roll impractical.

The Common Roll needs to be improved by ensuring that names of those who have registered with NID or the Civil Registry are automatically on the roll and that the Village Court officials and village recorders should be asked to verify every voter on the Common Roll. If there are duplication of names or if the numbers in the Common Roll is over and above the national Census, then the Village Court officials should be disciplined, charged and terminated. The Ward Roll and Common Roll should be updated in January every year from the data provided by the village recorder under the DPLGA.

11.8 Voting must be free, fair and safe

Election laws must be tough on the abuse of the voting process. Everyone must be allowed to vote freely, fairly and safely in the secret booths. There must be no community leaders or thugs or hooligans hijacking the process to control, block votes and distribute papers for candidates of their choice. There must be strict upholding of the principles of ballot papers, “one person, one vote”. Individuals’ choice must be respected. In the event that the legal principles of voting are compromised, the ballot boxes must be set aside and not counted or must be destroyed, and the polling declared as failed. In the event of widespread rigged election, the electorate’s election should be declared as failed and a by-election called after 12 months.

11.9 Counting/scrutiny of ballots should be localised in districts

Counting of ballots from each electorate must be localised. This will give responsibility to the people to take care of the ballot papers. The exercise of extracting ballot boxes to a central counting place is expensive. The state must do away with ballot box extraction, storage and counting under supervision of police or security personnel. The responsibility in a democratic society is for the people to be responsible voters and they must respect the electoral process and not by use of force. For example, in the LLG elections prior to 1997, every villager in each ward would assemble at the primary school and ballots are cast and when polling ends at 4:00 pm, the ballots are counted there and then and the councillor is declared there on the same day. A similar approach can be adopted to count votes at each polling station and data transmitted to the tally room in the district and central tally room at PNGEC headquarters on the same day by electronic means.

The PNGEC’s culture of ballot boxes that must be transported in convoys by police and locked in sealed containers at police stations and supervised opening and delivery of boxes to counting centres must cease as it only creates a suspicious environment and has huge costs in transport, convoy and storage fees.

11.10 Security operations must be more effective and efficient

The absence of security personnel or their lack of action is deplored and must be made public. The security personnel were told not to do anything as they were the same personnel who came from Hela and SHP whose polling were hijacked and rigged in front of them. The operations of security should be more effective and efficient going forward and must deter illegal practices especially illegal voting and sharing of preferences with threat and inducements.

11.11 Need for review of the qualification of candidates

There must be a piece of legislation from the eleventh Parliament to raise the level of qualification of candidates contesting in the NGEs. The candidate should possess at least a degree or diploma. Current sittings in Parliament shows that only some members contribute to debates while the rest sit through without any debate for the full five-year term.
11.12 Need for a number of electoral commissioners

Election laws must be changed to include more commissioners in PNGEC as opposed to the status quo. For example, there should be at least three to five commissioners from different agencies such as the Attorney General, Ombudsman Commission, a private citizen from the Council of Churches or the Business Council so that they can make inclusive decisions in the running of elections. That is, there must be a Chief Electoral Commissioner with three to five commissioners rather than one commissioner which currently is not working well for PNG’s NGEs.

11.13 Introduction of the Electronic Electoral System

The introduction and implementation of the Electronic Electoral System (EES) is strongly recommended. The electronic roll (e-roll) and e-voting with the use of e-identity will at least reduce the irregularities of election. Every eligible voter should be registered in the system with their image and fingerprint. The e-voting system should match their face with the identity on the e-roll. The government should seriously consider introducing this system in the country, going forward.

11.14 Strengthen the Ward Record System

The PNGEC should consult DPLGA and NSO to establish a sound Ward Record System (WRS) at the ward level which can be used in the election. There is a need to have yearly updates on the WRS to inform the PNGEC on how many people are physically on the ground during the voting period. This will restrict the movement of people in the last minute from one place to another and also minimise the number of ghost names.
12. Conclusion

The constant shifting of dates and delays in preparing the Common Roll, polling stations and polling dates casts doubts on the integrity of the elections even if they are conducted properly. The people of PNG have their own assumptions and bias against the PNGEC. It is good for the country that elections must be conducted as required by law and on time instead of creating doubts on the integrity of the election process in PNG.

Poor planning of the polling dates resulted in many illegal actions by candidates, voters, supporters and election officials. For example, EHP voted on 12 and 13 July and counting started on 21 July which is seven days away from the date for Return of Writs. There is likely to be many election disputes in the Courts noting that most counting was done hastily, and objections and disputes were not addressed as per the OLNLLGE.

The observation matters are raised to ensure the integrity of the polling and elections must be maintained and independence of the PNGEC must be paramount. The general observation that is applicable in most polling stations is that the most disadvantaged persons such as females, disabled, elderly and the poor were not given any opportunity to vote. The youths, mostly drunkards and drug addicts and those who received much support including cash from candidates, decided for the ward instead of individuals.

The PNGEC needs to seriously conduct a study into the election results and explain anomalies in most of the electorates especially at the gazetted government institutions such as the colleges and universities where the population represents people from across the country and whether the students and staff voted freely and in a secure environment with their names on the Common Roll.

This Observation Report is a contribution by the PNG NRI with the endorsement of its Council, to contribute to the discussions on improved future elections in PNG.


### Appendix 1: Primary count for Daulo Open Electorate

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Difference between first and second candidate: 3926 2264 2690 2826 1965

Absolute majority: 11767

Appendix 2: Top five candidates for Daulo Open Electorate leading to declaration