

Annual Report for the Calendar Year 2025/ Report on the Conduct of the General Election 2025





19th January 2026

His Majesty King Tupou VI,
Royal Palace,
NUKU'ALOFA.

Your Majesty,

**Report on the Conduct of the 2025 General Election
Annual Report for 2025 of the Electoral Commission**

In accordance with Section 14 of the *Electoral Commission Act 2010*, the Commission is required to submit to Your Majesty and to the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga:

- (a) an **Annual Report** for the Calendar Year 2025, to be delivered on or before 31 March 2026; and
- (b) a **Report on the Conduct of the General Election** held on 20 November 2025, to be delivered on or before 20 February 2026.

On behalf of the Commission, I have the honour to present these conjoined Reports for Your Majesty's gracious consideration.

The Commission respectfully reaffirms its steadfast loyalty to the Crown and its enduring commitment to the development of electoral services within the Kingdom of Tonga. In submitting these Reports, the Commission seeks to uphold the values of transparency and accountability, while demonstrating its dedication to the service of the Tongan people. It is the Commission's solemn duty to ensure that the electoral process continues to embody the highest standards of fairness, integrity, and public trust.

I have the honour to remain
Your Majesty's Loyal and Obedient Servant.

Rt. Hon Lord Dalgety K.C
Chairman, Electoral Commission

copy: Lord Vaea, Lord Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter to His Majesty King Tupou VI	i
Table of Contents	ii
Commissioners and Staff.....	1
Organisational Chart	1
The Electoral Commission	3
Tranining and Networking	5
Parliamentary Elections in Tonga	7
By-Elections	9
General Election 2025	11
Observers	18
Candidates	19
Polling Day & Election Results	21
Post Election	30
Acknowledgements	33

COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

Composition of the Commission and Staff Service

Throughout the year 2025, the Electoral Commission was comprised of three Commissioners:

- Rt. Hon. Lord Dalgety K.C. – Chairman
- Mr. Penisimani Maú
- Mr. Pita Vuki

In addition, Five members of staff rendered continuous service throughout 2025, as follows:

- Mr. Pita Vuki – Supervisor of Elections
- Mr. Henele Telefoni – Assistant Supervisor of Elections
- Mrs. Vika ‘Ulupano – Clerical Officer for Finance and Administration
- Mr. Samiuela Vao – Electoral Roll Manager
- Mrs. Cindy Kamisese – General Assistant (*contract*)

The Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Vuki, attained the mandatory retirement age in November 2025. In view of the General Election scheduled for 20 November 2025, the Commission approved an extension of his tenure through a short-term contract for an additional two months, ending on 5 January 2026

The Commission will commence the recruitment process to appoint a suitable successor to this important office. In addition, the position of Assistant Executive Officer remains vacant and will also be filled to ensure the effective and seamless execution of the Commission’s responsibilities in service to the people of Tonga.

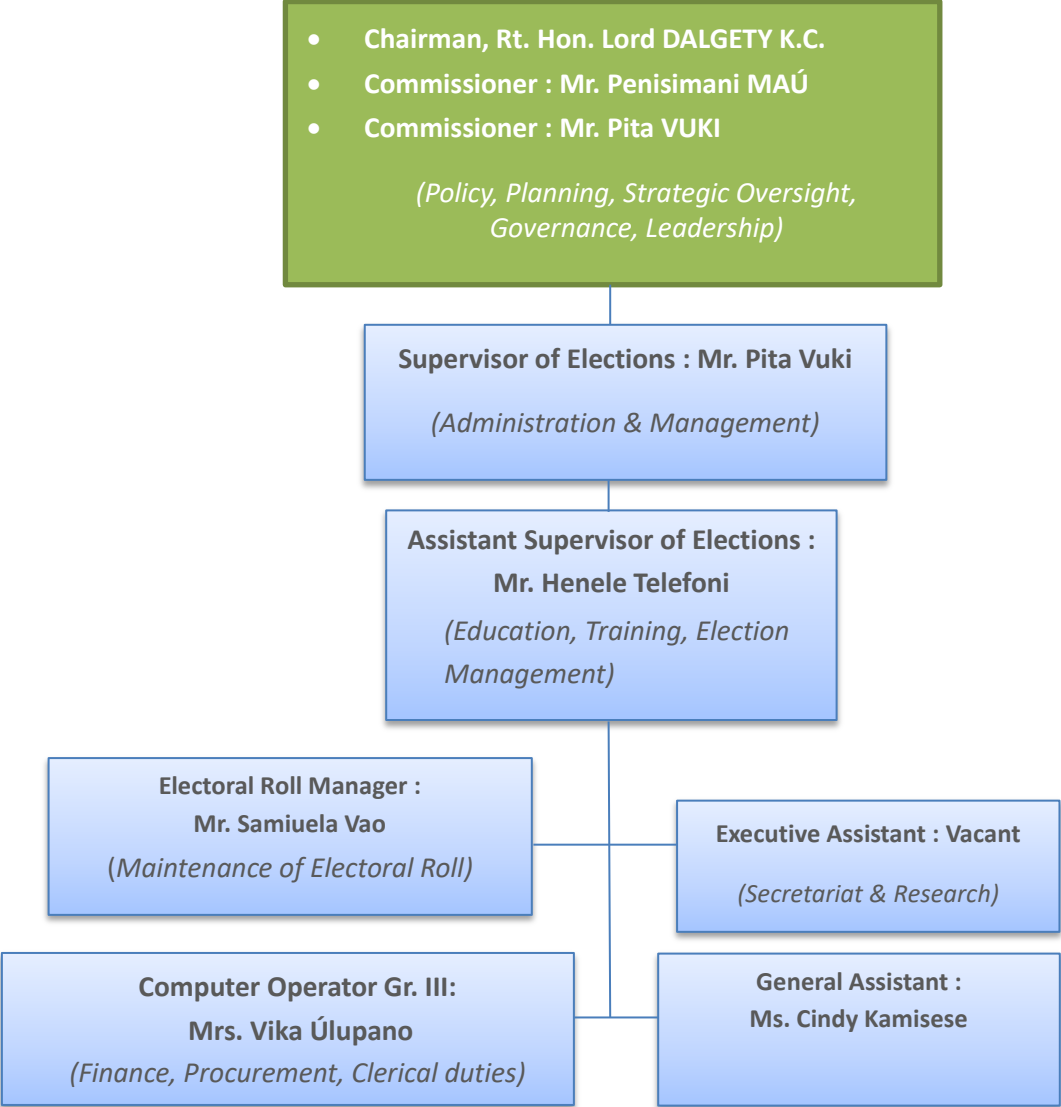
ORGANISATIONAL CHART

The Electoral Commission operated in 2025 under a clearly defined organisational structure designed to support its statutory mandate and ensure the effective administration of electoral processes.

The Commission was chaired by Rt. Hon. Lord Dalgety K.C., with Mr. Penisimani Maú and Mr. Pita Vuki serving as Commissioners. Mr. Vuki also held the dual role of Supervisor of Elections.

Reporting to the Supervisor of Elections was Mr. Henele Telefoni, Assistant Supervisor of Elections, who oversaw the operational team comprising Mr. Samiuela Vao (Electoral Roll Manager, contract), Ms. Vika ‘Ulupano (Clerical Officer for Finance and Administration), and Ms. Cindy Kamisese (General Assistant).

This structure reflects a streamlined hierarchy that balances leadership oversight with operational support, enabling the Commission to fulfill its responsibilities with efficiency, transparency, and integrity. However, there remains a need to extend the office’s presence to the outer islands to ensure greater accessibility for the public.



THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The Electoral Commission is a statutory body constituted under the Electoral Act 2010. It enjoys a reasonable degree of operational independence in the performance of its duties, ensuring impartiality and integrity in the administration of elections.

The activities of the Commission, particularly the conduct of National and Local elections, are guided by the following statutes and regulations:

- Act of Constitution of Tonga
- Electoral Act
- Electoral Commission Act
- Legislative Assembly Act
- District and Town Officers Act
- Electoral Regulations
- District and Town Officers Election Regulations
- Electoral (Election of Representatives of the Nobles) Regulations
- Electoral Petition Rules (Rules of the Supreme Court)

Together, these instruments provide the legal foundation for the Commission's work, reinforcing its mandate to uphold transparency, fairness, and inclusiveness in the democratic process.

Vision and Mission

Vision:

To be recognized as a trusted and respected institution that upholds democracy by delivering credible and transparent elections for the people of Tonga.

Mission:

To provide high-quality electoral services with passion, integrity, and efficiency, fostering public confidence in the electoral process and strengthening good governance in Tonga.

Objectives and Purposes of the Electoral Commission

The Electoral Commission is mandated to uphold the integrity of Tonga's democratic processes. Its Objectives are:

- **Orderly conduct of elections:** Ensuring the smooth administration of local (district and town officers), parliamentary elections, and by-elections.
- **Free, fair, and safe processes:** Safeguarding impartiality, transparency, and security throughout the electoral cycle.
- **Accurate electoral roll:** Maintaining an updated and reliable register of electors.
- **Informed community:** Promoting awareness and understanding of electoral matters among citizens.
- **Public participation:** Encouraging and supporting active involvement in the democratic process.
- **Assistance and support:** Providing guidance and resources to electors, polling officials, returning officers, and candidates.

These objectives align closely with the **Purposes** of the Commission, which are:

- **Empowering citizens:** Offering the highest level of assistance to ensure that citizens:
 - Understand the democratic process.
 - Appreciate the benefits of exercising their voting rights.
 - Know how to register as electors.
 - Are encouraged to participate fully in the democratic process.
- **Independent and impartial elections:** Guaranteeing that all local and parliamentary elections, including by-elections, are conducted in a manner that is independent, impartial, free, fair, and peaceful.

Together, these objectives and purposes reinforce the Commission’s commitment to transparency, inclusiveness, and the strengthening of Tonga’s democratic institution

Values of the Electoral Commission

The Commissioners uphold the following values as essential to the performance of their duties:

- **Neutrality:** The Commission must scrupulously maintain its independence. Only through neutrality can elections be conducted in accordance with best electoral practice, ensuring a free, fair, and peaceful environment.
- **Legality:** All electoral practices and procedures must be carried out in strict compliance with the law, reinforcing the integrity of the democratic process.
- **Transparency:** Public confidence in the Commission’s neutrality and legality requires openness, transparency, and accountability in all operations.
- **Service:** The Commissioners recognize that there is no greater service to the citizens of Tonga than ensuring that democratic electoral processes prevail throughout the Kingdom.

Functions of the Electoral Commission

The primary function of the Electoral Commission remains the provision of a safe, free and fair electoral process. To achieve this, the Commission undertakes:

- **Consultation and information dissemination:** Ongoing engagement with the Tongan citizenry to ensure awareness and understanding of electoral matters.
- **Review of laws and practices:** Regular assessment of legislation, policies, and procedures to reflect societal changes and maintain adherence to best practice.
- **Voter registration:** A core responsibility, essential to safeguarding the credibility and integrity of elections in the Kingdom of Tonga.

TRAINING AND NETWORKING

During the reporting period, members of the Commission's staff attended a series of workshops and training programs that were generously organized and funded by donor partners through PIANZEA (Pacific Islands, Australia, and New Zealand Electoral Administrators) Network. These capacity-building initiatives provided valuable opportunities for staff to strengthen their technical knowledge, enhance professional skills, and deepen their understanding of international best practices in electoral administration.

The Commission acknowledges with appreciation the on-going support of the Australian and New Zealand Governments, Pacific Islands Australia and New Zealand Electoral Administrators (PIANZEA) Network, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, UNDP and SPC whose contributions have played a vital role in fostering institutional growth and ensuring that the Commission remains equipped to deliver electoral services with integrity, transparency, and efficiency.

- The Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Pita Vuki, together with the Assistant Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Henele Telefoni were invited by the Australian Electoral Commission through the PIANZEA network to attend the Electoral Visitors Program organized by the AEC from 30 April to 4 May 2025, coinciding with the Australian Federal Election held on Saturday, 3 May 2025.

They had the opportunity to observe firsthand the preparatory work at the main office of the Australian Electoral Commission in Canberra. In addition, they visited several polling stations to monitor the pre-polling process. On polling day, they returned to selected stations to observe the conduct of voting, and later witnessed the closing procedures, including the counting of ballots. These observations provided valuable

insights into the practical measures that ensure transparency, accountability, and public confidence in the electoral process.

- The Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Pita Vuki, together with the Electoral Roll Manager, Mr. Samiuela Vao, attended the Pacific Training Excellence Workshop held in Brisbane, Australia, from 19–21 May 2025. The workshop was hosted by the New Zealand Electoral Commission (NZEC) under the Pacific Election Assistance Programme (PEAP).

The program brought together electoral administrators from across the region to strengthen capacity in designing and delivering smarter, stronger, and more robust training programmes, thereby enhancing professional standards and resilience within electoral management

- The Supervisor of Elections was also invited to participate as part of the Pacific Islands Forum Observer Team deployed to Samoa from 27–30 August 2025, at the request of the Government of Samoa, to observe their General Election held on 29 August 2025.

The participation of the Supervisor of Elections in this important mission underscores the Kingdom of Tonga’s commitment to regional cooperation and the strengthening of democratic processes across the Pacific. He joined his fellow observers Mr. Nemani Mati, one of the Electoral Commissioners from Fiji Electoral Commission and two staff members from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. The Observer Team has since completed its report, which will be shared by the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat with the Government and the Electoral Commission of Samoa in due course. Tonga’s involvement in this mission reflects the Commission’s dedication to promoting electoral integrity, fostering mutual learning among Pacific nations, and contributing to the collective effort of ensuring that elections throughout the region are conducted with fairness, transparency, and public trust.

- The Assistant Supervisor of Elections, Mr. Henele Telefoni, together with Computer Operator Grade III, Mrs. Vika Úlupano, participated in a BRIDGE workshop on *Voter and Civic Education* and *Pilot Climate Change and Elections* for Polynesian Electoral Management Bodies. The workshop was held from 23rd to 25th September 2025 in Funafuti, Tuvalu. It was organized and funded by UNDP and PIANZEA, in close partnership with the Tuvalu Electoral Commission.
- Later in the year, the Supervisor of Elections attended the 2025 Senior Officials Meeting of Election Administrators in the Region, convened by PIANZEA in Auckland, New Zealand, on 16–17 October 2025.

- In an effort to promote electoral inclusivity, the Commission collaborated with the Pacific Community (SPC) to establish the Elections Disabilities Access Working Group (EDAWG) which is a collaborative platform established to ensure that elections in Tonga are inclusive and accessible to all. This initiative engages with agencies supporting persons with disabilities in Tonga, focusing on areas that can enhance their participation in the electoral process and ensure their active involvement in the process. On 18 March 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Commission and the SPC, formally establishing the working group to undertake the previously identified activities and ensure their effective implementation.

The Electoral Commission greatly appreciates the valuable opportunities provided by its donor partners through these workshops and networking initiatives. Their continued support has been instrumental in strengthening the Commission's capacity to enhance staff and management skills, develop effective strategies, and address electoral challenges faced by Electoral Management Bodies across the region. Such collaboration not only benefits Tonga but also contributes to the resilience and sustainability of democratic processes throughout the region.

PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN TONGA

Democratic Governance

Genuine parliamentary elections are an absolute necessity before democratic governance can be said to exist in any country. It is through such elections that citizens freely express their will as to who will govern and legislate on their behalf. In doing so, the electorate confers legitimacy upon their elected representatives and the national institutions they serve.

Parliamentary elections therefore stand as the cornerstone of democratic governance, ensuring that authority is derived from the people and exercised in accordance with their collective choice

International Instruments Relevant to Tonga's Electoral Process

There are numerous international instruments, comprising both legally binding obligations and political commitments, which collectively provide a comprehensive framework against which the electoral process and domestic legislation in any country can be assessed. In the case of the Kingdom of Tonga, such instruments include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948: Establishes fundamental rights and freedoms, including the right to participate in government through free and fair elections.
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), 1966: Legally binding treaty guaranteeing rights such as freedom of expression, association, and the right to vote.
- International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ICERD), 1966: Prohibits discrimination in political participation and ensures equal access to electoral processes.
- U.N. Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), 2003: Provides measures to prevent corruption in public institutions, including electoral management bodies.
- U.N. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2006: Ensures accessibility and inclusiveness in elections for persons with disabilities.
- Charter of the Commonwealth, 2013: Affirms democratic principles, rule of law, and respect for human rights among member states.
- Harare Declaration, 1991: Reasserts Commonwealth values of democracy, good governance, and human rights.
- Trinidad and Tobago Affirmation of Commonwealth Values and Principles, 2009: Reinforces commitments to transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness in governance.

Why This Matters for Tonga

- **Benchmarking:** These instruments provide standards against which Tonga's electoral laws and practices can be measured.
- **Inclusiveness:** They emphasize participation for all groups, including minorities and persons with disabilities.
- **Integrity:** They strengthen safeguards against corruption and promote transparency in electoral administration.
- **Global alignment:** They situate Tonga within the international community of democracies, reinforcing legitimacy and trust.

Read together these instruments provide a template for electoral best practice. To achieve that standard the electoral system must demonstrate that: -

- There is transparency in the electoral process;
- The election administration acts in an effective, impartial, independent and accountable manner;
- There is equal access for candidates, to the media, and there is balanced media coverage for all candidates;

- Where provided, there is equal access for candidates and political organisations to state resources where applicable;
- The electorate is informed of its rights through civic and voter education programmes; and
- Elections proceed in a peaceful atmosphere, free from violence, intimidation or threat of reprisals for electors, candidates and political parties.

Compliance with International Obligations

After a comprehensive review of the relevant international obligations and commitments, together with the domestic law of the Kingdom, the Electoral Commission is of the opinion that the Kingdom of Tonga satisfies, in virtually all respects, the test for electoral best practice.

Such best practice is firmly embedded within the key legislative requirements of the Kingdom relating to elections, as detailed earlier in this Report. These provisions collectively ensure that Tonga's electoral system reflects the principles of transparency, impartiality, inclusiveness, and accountability, consistent with both international standards and the nation's constitutional framework.

BY-ELECTIONS

Whenever a vacancy arises in the seat of a Member of Parliament or in the office of a District or Town Officer, a by-election shall be conducted to fill that vacancy. This ensures continuity of representation and the effective functioning of both the Legislative Assembly and local governance structures.

Growth of By-Elections in Tonga (2022–2025)

By way of comparison, the number of by-elections has increased in recent years, requiring the Commission to devote considerable time, effort, and resources to their conduct. This growth reflects both the dynamic nature of the electoral landscape and the Commission's responsibility to ensure that each By-election is administered with the same standards of fairness, transparency, and integrity as a General Election.

Year	Parliamentary By-Elections	District & Town Officers By-Elections	Notes
2022	i. Ha'apai 12 ii. Tongatapu 4 iii. Tongatapu 6 iv. Tongatapu 7	i. Mataika Haápai ii. Moúngaóne iii. Petani Niuafóú	Significant increase in both parliamentary and town officer contests.
2023	i. Tongatapu 8 ii. Tongatapu 10	i. Lapaha ii. Kolomaile, Éua iii. Haákio	Also, General Election for District and Town Officers (25 May 2023).
2024	i. Vavaú 14	i. Éua Foóu (District Officer) ii. Houma, Éua iii. Haveluliku iv. Falehau, Niuatoputapu	Also, one candidate for Muá (Niuafó'u) was declared elected unopposed.
2025	-	i. Áhau, Tongatapu ii. Kolomaile, Éua iii. Manuka iv. Matamaka v. Haveluloto vi. Haákame	Also, one candidate for Olo'ua (Vava'u) declared elected unopposed. Also, Parliamentary General Election (20 November 2025).

Key Observations

- **Rising frequency:** From 2022 to 2025, by-elections have become a recurring feature, with multiple contests each year.
- **Resource implications:** Each by-election requires full logistical planning, staffing, and outreach, placing strain on Commission resources.
- **Unopposed candidates:** In some cases (Muá 2024, Olo'ua 2025), candidates were declared elected without contest, reflecting both efficiency and limited competition.

- **Operational challenge:** The cumulative effect of these contests diverts attention from long-term planning and training, underscoring the need for resilience in electoral management.

On 13 March 2025: By-elections were conducted to fill vacancies in the offices of the Town Officers of Áhau, Tongatapu, and Kolomaile, 'Eua, following the passing of both incumbents.

- Mr. Siasoi Lausifí Latu'íla was duly elected as Town Officer of Áhau.
- Mr. Vilisoni Ngalu was elected as Town Officer of Kolomaile, 'Eua.

On 17 April 2025: A by-election was held to elect the Town Officer of Manuka, resulting in the election of Mr. Tevita Kaufusi.

On 12 June 2025: Nominations for the office of Town Officer of Oloúá, Vavaú closed with only one candidate, Mr. Ulaiasi M. Tufunga, who was accordingly declared elected.

On 10 July 2025: A by-election was conducted for the office of Town Officer of Matamaka, and Mr. Tisikasi P. Pahulu was duly elected.

On 2nd October 2025: By-elections were conducted to fill vacancies in the offices of the Town Officers of Haveluloto and Ha'akame, following the passing of both incumbents.

- Ms. Finau Tutu'ú was duly elected as Town Officer of Haveluloto.
- Mr. Tevita T. Tahitu'a was elected as Town Officer of Ha'akame.

These by-elections ensured continuity of local leadership and effective administration of community affairs in both districts.

GENERAL ELECTION, 20 NOVEMBER 2025

The Kingdom of Tonga holds its General Parliamentary Election every four years. Following the last election in 2021, the year 2025 was designated as the next election year. This regular cycle ensures continuity in Tonga's democratic process, allowing citizens to elect representatives to the Legislative Assembly and shape the nation's governance.

Election Schedule for the 2025 General Election

In preparation for the 2025 General Election, the Commission considered and adopted an election schedule with key dates to guide the planning and implementation of electoral activities. The schedule was designed to ensure that all statutory requirements were met in

accordance with the timeframe as set out by the Electoral Commission Act 2010 and that the necessary arrangements were completed in a timely and orderly manner.

Event	Date
Publication of the Provisional Roll	Friday 28 th February 2025
Training of Returning and Assistant Returning Officers	Thursday 11 th & Friday 12 th September 2025
Issue of Writs of Election	Thursday 11 th September 2025
Publication of the Final Roll	Friday 19 th September 2025
Nomination of Candidates	Wednesday 8 th and Thursday 9 th October 2025
Withdrawal of Nomination	Wednesday 15 th & Thursday 16 th October 2025
Printing of Ballot Papers	Monday 13 th – Friday 24 th October 2025
Training of Polling Officials - Éua	Thursday 23 rd October 2025
Training of Polling Officials - Vavaú	Tuesday 28 th & Wednesday 29 th October 2025
Training of Polling Officials - Niuatoputapu	Thursday 30 th October 2025
Training of Polling Officials - Niuafóú	Friday 31 st October 2025
Publication of the Supplementary Roll	Thursday 6 th November 2025
Training of Polling Officials - Tongatapu	Wednesday 5 th – Wednesday 12 th November 2025
Training of Polling Officials - Haápai	Thursday 13 th November 2025
POLLING DAY	Thursday 20th November 2025
Recount	By Thursday 27 th November 2025

Return of Writs to His Majesty the King	On or before Thursday 4 th December 2025
Submission of Candidates Returns of Election Expenses Statement	Thursday 4 th December 2025
Report on General Election	Friday 20 th February 2026

Voter Registration

Voter registration is an ongoing process and a cornerstone of electoral integrity. The Commission strives to maintain an accurate and updated electoral roll, despite challenges such as:

- **Population mobility:** Movement of citizens between districts and towns.
- **Eligibility verification:** Identifying those who remain or become Tongan subjects, and confirming records of deceased persons.

To address these challenges, the Commission has implemented:

- **Special voter registration programs and outreach missions:** Conducted nationwide in collaboration with District and Town Officers, combining registration with voter education.
- **Partnerships with community leaders:** Dialogue with Church Leaders to expand contact with grassroots voters.
- **Collaboration with registrars:**
 - Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages — to confirm deceased voters and the 21st birthdays of new voters.
 - Registrar of the Supreme Court — to obtain details of convictions that disqualify electors under Clause 23 of the Constitution.

Legal Requirement

Under the Electoral Act, voter registration is mandatory for every Tongan subject upon reaching 21 years of age. Failure to register constitutes an offence punishable by a fine not exceeding 50 pa'anga. However, the Commission has **not** exercised this enforcement power, preferring

instead to secure registration through persuasion and personal contact during outreach programs.

Electoral Roll

Following the nationwide community visit program, the Provisional Electoral Roll was published on 28 February 2025 as part of preparations for this year's General Election. Copies of the roll were distributed to all District and Town Officers across the country. These copies were made available for public inspection, allowing any member of the community to review the information and submit corrections.

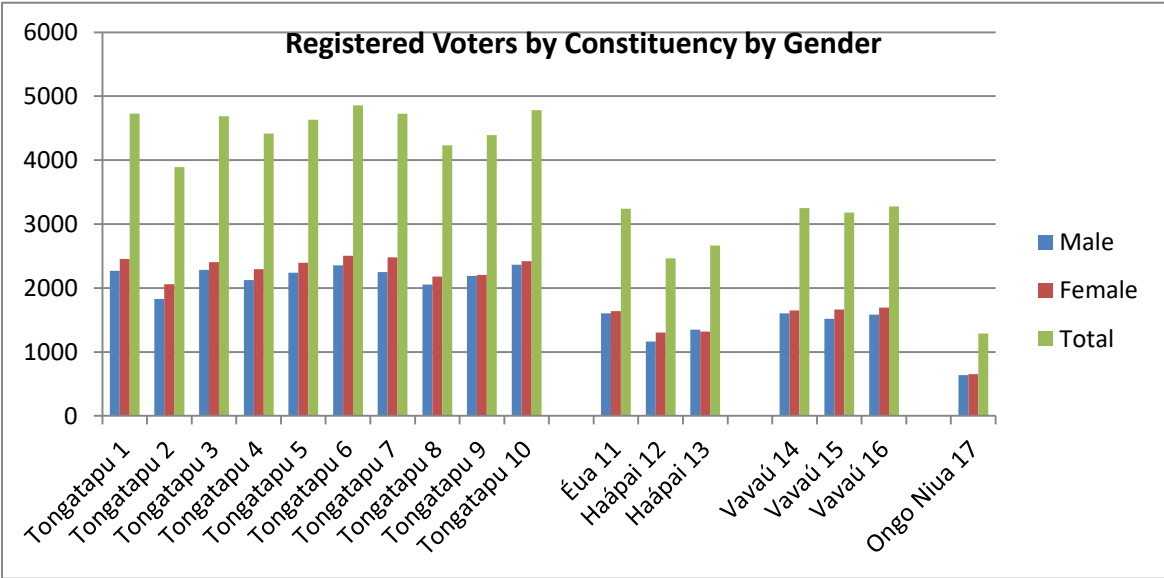
The Final Electoral Roll was published in accordance with the Electoral Act on 19 September 2025. Registration remained open to provide opportunities for individuals who became eligible after the publication of the Final Roll, up until two weeks before the election. A Supplementary Roll, incorporating all new registrations, was subsequently published on 6 November 2025.

For 2025 General Election, the total number of registered voters was 64,707, comprising 49% male and 51% female voters

Total Registered Voters by Constituency by Gender

Constituency	Male	Female	Total	%
Tongatapu 1	2,269	2,456	4,725	
Tongatapu 2	1,829	2,061	3,890	
Tongatapu 3	2,282	2,404	4,686	
Tongatapu 4	2,125	2,293	4,418	
Tongatapu 5	2,237	2,394	4,631	
Tongatapu 6	2,355	2,502	4,857	
Tongatapu 7	2,249	2,479	4,728	
Tongatapu 8	2,054	2,179	4,233	
Tongatapu 9	2,189	2,204	4,393	
Tongatapu 10	2,365	2,418	4,783	
Sub-Total	21,954	23,390	45,344	70
Éua 11	1,604	1,637	3,241	5
Haápai 12	1,161	1,303	2,464	
Haápai 13	1,346	1,320	2,666	
Sub-Total	2,507	2,623	5,130	8
Vavaú 14	1,602	1,649	3,251	
Vavaú 15	1,517	1,663	3,180	
Vavaú 16	1,582	1,691	3,273	
Sub-Total	4,701	5,003	9,704	15
Ongo Niua 17	637	651	1,288	2
Total	31,403	33,304	64,707	

The distribution of registered voters across Tonga’s 17 electoral constituencies reveals a marked concentration in Tongatapu, which accounts for 70% of the electorate. Vava’u follows with 15%, Ha’apai with 8%, ‘Eua with 5%, and Ongo Niua with only 2%. This distribution highlights the demographic weight of Tongatapu in national elections, while also underscoring the importance of tailored outreach and logistical planning for smaller island groups to ensure inclusiveness and visibility.



As shown in the graph, the electoral constituency Tongatapu 6 recorded the highest number of registered voters with a total of 4,857 while Ongo Niua 17 had the lowest, with a total of 1,288 voters. This disparity underscores the varying scale of constituencies across the Kingdom, with larger electorates requiring greater logistical support, resources, and outreach to ensure smooth operations. Conversely, smaller constituencies, though easier to manage administratively, present unique challenges in maintaining inclusiveness and visibility, particularly in remote areas. Understanding these differences is critical for planning, resource allocation, and ensuring fairness in the electoral process.

Voter Registration and Electoral Roll Integrity

The number of registered voters has continued to increase in each of the past four General Elections. This growth may reflect the effectiveness of the registration process and the Commission’s community visits programme. However, further review is warranted to identify electors who have migrated overseas for extended periods or those who have passed away but remain on the roll.

Many people make the effort to register their newborn babies, yet often neglect to register the deceased. Strengthening and enforcing relevant laws is essential to maintaining an updated and reliable electoral roll. Furthermore, strengthening electronic data sharing among key stakeholders such as the Registrar of births, deaths, and marriages; Immigration, and the Ministry of Health and Justice could help address this gap and would allow for more accurate reconciliation of records and ensure that the official rolls remain complete and up to date.

Since election facilities are not provided for citizens residing overseas, such as those engaged in temporary working schemes, it is essential that voter registration and the electoral roll be periodically reviewed, and perhaps consider a voting system that captured those who are travelling on a temporary basis. Where necessary, legislative amendments should be considered to strengthen this process.

One option would be the introduction of a comprehensive new registration programme every eight years, ensuring that a clean and accurate electoral roll is obtained. This would enhance the integrity of the electoral process, safeguard against inaccuracies, and maintain public confidence in the system.

Communication – Information Dissemination

The Electoral Commission continued to rely on conventional methods of disseminating information to the public, including television and radio programs. Telephone short messages service (SMS) were disseminated through the two main service providers, TCC and Digicel. In addition, short videos and jingles were broadcasted on radio and television to encourage young voters to actively participate in the electoral process. To maximize outreach, information was also shared through the Commission's official Facebook page. With support from the Australian Electoral Commission, a website was developed to further enhance information dissemination. Although the website was initially expected to go live several months before the election, it was only launched a few weeks prior. Nevertheless, it is anticipated that the website will serve as a valuable resource in providing accurate and accessible information on elections in Tonga in the years ahead.

Polling Stations

On Election Day, a total of 215 polling stations were established across the country for electors to cast their votes for the People's Representatives. In addition, six polling places were designated for the Nobles to vote for the Nobles' Representatives, bringing the overall total to 221 polling stations nationwide

Temporary Election Staff

Elections require the appointment of a substantial number of Temporary Election Staff. For the General Election, the total number of election staff engaged was **754**, as follows:

Island District	Returning Officers	Assistant Returning Officers	Polling Officers	TOTAL
Tongatapu	1	10	397	408
Vavaú	1	2	130	133
Haápai	1	2	104	107
Éua	1	1	70	72
Ongo Niuá	1	2	31	34
TOTAL	5	17	732	754

To ensure that election officials were fully prepared to deliver their responsibilities at polling stations across the country, the Electoral Commission conducted a series of comprehensive trainings. These sessions were designed to equip officials with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to uphold the integrity of the electoral process.

Assistant Returning Officers from the outer islands were convened in Tongatapu for a two-day training program held on 11th and 12th September 2025.

Due to transportation difficulties, representatives from the two Niua islands were unable to attend the Tongatapu sessions. However, the Commission expresses its gratitude to the Australian Government, whose generosity made it possible to charter a flight to deliver election materials to both Niua islands. This also enabled the training team to travel and conduct sessions directly in those communities, ensuring no constituency was left behind.

In the weeks leading up to Polling Day, the Commission organized additional training programs for Polling Officials across the islands. These sessions were conducted in:

- 'Eua
- Vava'u
- Ongo Niua
- Tongatapu
- Ha'apai

Each training emphasized the importance of impartiality, accuracy in voter handling, and adherence to established procedures. Officials were also guided on how to manage unexpected challenges on polling day, ensuring that every voter could exercise their democratic right in a fair and transparent environment.

OBSERVER MISSIONS

For the 2025 General Election, five Diplomatic Observer Missions were established by the High Commissioners, Ambassadors, and staff of the:

- Australian High Commission
- British High Commission
- New Zealand High Commission
- Embassy of the People's Republic of China
- Japanese Embassy
- Representative of the French Embassy in Suva, Fiji

In addition, the missions were joined by a team of observers from the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Tonga National University.

The Electoral Commission welcomed the establishment of these observer missions, which ensured independent, impartial, and credible observation of the Tongan electoral process. Their presence reinforced transparency and strengthened public confidence in the integrity of the election. On Tuesday, 18 November 2025, election observer briefings were held by the Commissions to provide guidance and electoral information to observer missions. These sessions were designed to help observers understand the electoral framework, campaign environment, and polling procedures ahead of elections

Some of the observer missions have now reported their findings to the Commission. The Commission will carefully review these reports and consider their recommendations with a view to further improving the delivery of electoral services in Tonga.

This process of reflection and adjustment underscores the Commission's commitment to continuous improvement, transparency, and accountability. By engaging with independent

assessments, the Commission ensures that Tonga’s electoral system remains aligned with international best practice while responding to the evolving needs of its electorate

CANDIDATES

Candidate Participation Overview

- **Nobles’ Election – Introduction of Nomination Process**

For the 2025 General Election, the Nobles’ Election marked a significant procedural development. For the first time, noble candidates were required to formally register through a nomination process, conducted on the same date and at the same times as the nomination of candidates for the People’s Representatives.

This change ensured consistency across both electoral streams, reinforcing principles of transparency, accountability, and fairness in candidate selection. By aligning the processes, the Commission strengthened the integrity of the electoral framework and demonstrated its commitment to harmonizing procedures for all categories of representation.

At the close of nominations, a total of eighteen candidates were duly registered to contest the nine seats reserved for the Nobility. One candidate, originally registered for both Tongatapu and ‘Eua, was subsequently disqualified. Accordingly, sixteen candidates remained to contest the seats on polling day. The distribution of candidates was as follows: Tongatapu (5), Vava’u (4), Ha’apai (3), ‘Eua (3), and Ongo Niua (1). In the case of Ongo Niua, only one candidate was nominated, and in accordance with the electoral laws, that candidate was declared elected unopposed.

- **People’s Representatives:**

A total of 71 candidates contested for the 17 seats for Peoples’ Representatives in Parliament. Of these, 63 were male and 8 were female, reflecting strong participation while underscoring the importance of continued efforts to promote gender inclusivity.

Candidates for People's Representatives to the Legislative Assembly by Gender: National Elections [2010 – 2025]

Constitutency	2010			2014			2017			2021			2025		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Tongatapu 1	8	-	8	5	3	8	9	2	11	5	-	5	3	-	3
Tongatapu 2	7	2	9	4	-	4	4	1	5	3	-	3	2	-	2
Tongatapu 3	9	1	10	5	2	7	4	2	6	2	1	3	1	1	2
Tongatapu 4	6	1	7	8	1	9	4	2	6	3	-	3	4	-	4
Tongatapu 5	12	1	13	3	1	4	3	2	5	2	2	4	2	1	3
Tongatapu 6	14	1	15	4	-	4	5	-	5	1	1	2	4	2	6
Tongatapu 7	9	1	10	5	3	8	6	1	7	5	1	6	5	2	7
Tongatapu 8	9	1	10	5	-	5	5	-	5	5	-	5	7	-	7
Tongatapu 9	14	1	15	5	2	7	3	1	4	5	1	6	3	1	4
Tongatapu 10	11	1	12	4	1	5	3	1	4	2	1	3	4	-	4
	99	10	109	48	13	61	46	12	58	33	7	40	35	7	42
Eua 11	3	-	3	4	1	5	5	1	6	3	1	4	3	1	4
Haápai 12	10	1	11	6	-	6	3	-	3	5	1	6	6	-	6
Haápai 13	3	-	3	5	-	5	3	-	3	4	1	5	5	-	5
	13	1	14	11	-	11	6	-	6	9	2	11	11	-	11
Vavaú 14	7	-	7	6	1	7	3	-	3	4	1	5	3	-	3
Vavaú 15	6	-	6	11	1	12	5	1	6	4	1	5	5	-	5
Vavaú 16	5	-	5	7	-	7	4	1	5	4	-	4	2	-	2
	18	-	18	24	2	26	12	2	14	12	2	14	10	-	10
Ongo Niua 17	3	-	3	3	-	3	2	-	2	4	-	4	4	-	4
Total	136 [93%]	11 [7%]	147	90 [85%]	16 [15%]	106	71 [83%]	15 [17%]	86	61 [84%]	12 [16%]	73	63 [89%]	8 [11%]	71

POLLING DAY & ELECTION RESULTS

Thursday, 20 November 2025, was Election Day throughout the Kingdom of Tonga. On this day, electors chose 9 Representatives of the Nobles and 17 Representatives of the People to serve in the Legislative Assembly for the four-year term from November 2025 to November 2029.

Results of the Nobles' Election

District	Candidate	Votes
Tongatapu	Maáfu	12
	Vaea	10
	Tuívakano	8
	Lasike	6
	Veéhala	0
Vavaú	Tuíáfitu	5
	Tuílakepa	5
	Luani	3
	Fulivai	1
Haápai	Fakafanua	6
	Tuíhaángana	6
	Tuíhaáteiho	2
Éua	Veéhala	10
	Lasike	1
	Tuívakano	0
Ongo Niua	At the close of nominations, HSH Prince Fotofili was the sole candidate and in accordance with the Electoral Regulations, he was declared elected unopposed	

Results for the Peoples Representatives' Election:

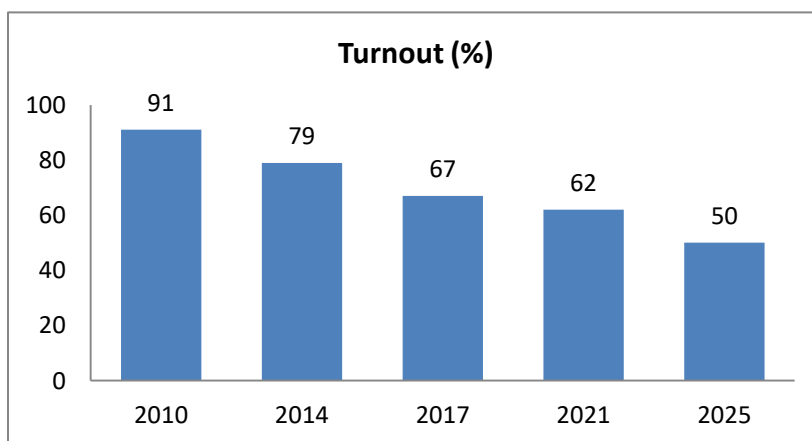
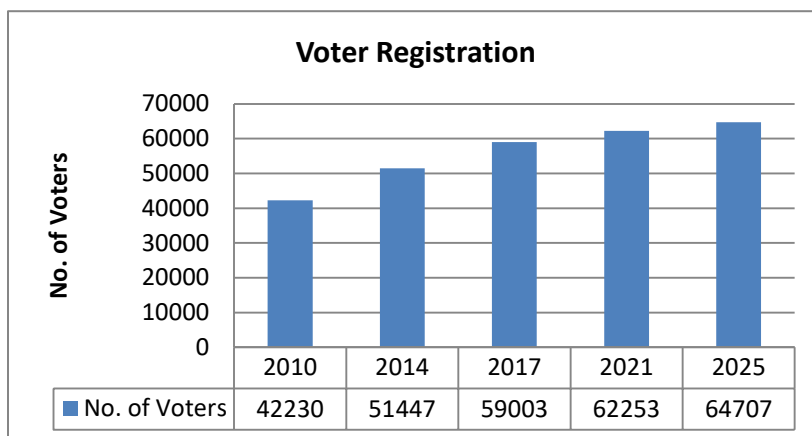
The figures reveal a consistent pattern: Outer Islands constituencies continue to demonstrate stronger voter engagement (59% - 65%) compared to Tongatapu (36% - 49%), echoing the turnout trends observed in the 2021 General Election. The overall turn-out for 2025 General Election was 50% which is the lowest compared to previous four elections since 2010. Meanwhile, the Nobles constituencies show exceptionally high participation, with Ha'apai achieving full turnout.

The low turned-out in the election of the peoples' representatives is a concern to the Electoral Commission and should be appropriately addressed for future elections. The national census 2021 recorded responses indicating that some individuals chose not to vote because they were "not interested". In response, the Commission strengthened its outreach program in the last two years by visiting every village to explain the importance of participation in the electoral process. Voter registration was conducted concurrently, ensuring that eligible citizens had the opportunity to update their details and confirm their inclusion on the electoral roll during these outreach activities. The initiative aimed to encourage disengaged individuals to participate more actively and to create opportunities for open discussion on the issue. Unfortunately, the recent election results suggest that these efforts have not achieved the desired effect, highlighting the need to reassess current strategies and explore new approaches to encourage broader participation.

The fuel shortage at time of election may have been a factor, as it made transportation somewhat difficult for some voters. Nevertheless, polling stations were established in every village throughout the country to facilitate the voting process.

To maximize voter turnout, it may be worthwhile to explore alternative approaches. In some countries, participation in elections is compulsory. For instance, our neighboring country Samoa has recently introduced mandatory voting, with a penalty of \$100 for those who fail to comply. This measure aligns with several recommendations voiced by the public during the outreach program, suggesting that compulsory voting could be an effective way to strengthen civic engagement and ensure broader representation.

An analysis of voter registration compared with voter turnout over the last five General Elections reveals a concerning trend. Although the number of registered voters has steadily increased, the percentage of those who actually cast their ballots has continued to decline, as illustrated in the graphs below. This pattern presents significant challenges for the Commission to address as it prepares for the next General Election in four years.



Election Results by Electoral Constituency

Final Results for TONGATAPU 1 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Tevita Fatafehi Puloka	1343	62.58%
Siaosi Vailahi Pohiva	758	35.32%
‘Eliesa Fifita	45	2.10%

TURNOUT of 46%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 2 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
‘Uhilamoelangi Fasi	764	44.55%
Semisi Kioa Lafu Sika	951	55.45%

TURNOUT of 44%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 3 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Siaosi ‘Ofa ki Vahafolau Sovaleni	1,239	72.75%
Gabriella Renne Blake ‘Ilolahia	464	27.25%

TURNOUT of 36%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 4 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
‘Isileli Pulu	56	2.97%
Mateni Tapueluelu	1,021	54.11%
Viliami A. Takau	808	42.82%
Vili Fonolahi Pese a.k.a Sione Laulaupeaálu	2	0.11%

TURNOUT of 43%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 5 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Adi Mitimiti Pasikala	102	4.74%
Hekisou Fifita	480	22.33%
'Aisake Valu Eke	1,568	72.93%

TURNOUT 46%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 6 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Fane Fotu Fituafe	978	42.67%
Tahifisi Vehikite	48	2.09%
Dulcie Elaine Tei	835	36.43%
Viliani Mahe Poése	283	12.35%
Sepeti Vakameilalo	22	0.96%
Sione Leki	126	5.50%

TURNOUT of 47%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 7 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Siueli Éleni Mone	155	6.96%
Kitione Nikua	67	3.01%
Siaosi Ákapei K. Maílei	499	22.41%
Tauáho Áhokovi	266	11.94%
Mateitalo Folaumoetao	12	0.54%
Lute Finau	51	2.29%
Paula Piveni Piukala	1177	52.85%

TURNOUT of 47%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 8 – 2025 General Election

Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Johnny Grattan Vaea Taione	233	11.66%
Sipaisi Kutu	174	8.70%
Viliami Sisifa	567	28.36%
Raymond Lafu Sika	398	19.91%%
Poasi Fonua	97	4.85%
Filia Hetau Uipi	309	15.46%
Taufa Kuli Áhomeé	221	11.6%

TURNOUT of 47%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 9 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Puluno Ípolito Lasalo	101	4.68%
Vika Vaka Fusimalohi	164	7.60%
Sevenitini Toumoúa	1,076	49.88%
Tevita Tukunga	816	37.83%

TURNOUT of 49%

Final Results for TONGATAPU 10 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Fakaósi Maama	460	19.62%
Matani Nifofa	290	12.37%
Kapelieli Militoni Lanumata	1,423	60.68%
Tulutulu Mafuaíolotele Kalaniuvalu	172	7.33%

TURNOUT of 49%

Final Results for 'EUA 11 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Taniela Liku'ohihifo Fusimalohi	1,179	60.62%
Tevita Lavemaau	709	36.45%
Siuaki Livai	55	2.83%
Silivia Loumaile Mahe	2	0.10%

TURNOUT of 60%

Final Results for HA'APAI 12 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Moále Finau	395	26.91%
Sione Finau Tapu	190	12.94%
Penisimani Tavalu Fatafehi	10	0.68%
Saimone Kapetaua Vuki	437	29.77%
Tevita Vaikona	315	21.46%
Sione Foaki Fifita	121	8.24%

TURNOUT of 60%

Final Results for HA'APAI 13 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Veivosa Light of Life Taka	475	28.68%
Suia Taufu	39	2.36%
Fofofili Mahe	70	4.23%
Samuela Ákilisi Pohiva II	522	31.52%
Ésafe Hema Latu	550	33.21%

TURNOUT of 62%

Final Results for VAVA'U 14 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Latu Niua Lepolo	288	16.58%
Moále Ótunuku	1,053	60.62%
Tuámelié Topui	396	22.80%

TURNOUT of 55%

Final Results for VAVA'U 15 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Arthur Afuhaámango	3	0.16%
Keuli Pasina Lavaki	433	22.60%
Samiu Kuita Vaipulu	451	23.54%
Álani Petelo Tangitau	848	44.26%
Tomifa Faingaá Paea	181	9.45%

TURNOUT of 60%

Final Results for VAVA'U 16 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Étuate Sungalu Lavulavu	782	40.75%
Viliami Uasike Latu	1,137	59.25%

TURNOUT of 59%

Final Results for ONGO NIUA 17 – 2025 General Election		
Candidates Names	Votes	% of Votes Cast
Vatau Mefi Hui	61	7.26%
Paula Vovole Kohinoa	195	23.21%
Áisake Hoatau Finau	44	5.24%
Lataífaingataá Tangimana	540	64.29%

TURNOUT of 65%

Recounts in the General Election

Unlike the 2021 General Election, where five recounts of the results were conducted, none of the 71 candidates in the 2025 General Election demanded a recount. Consequently, the results announced on the night of the election were confirmed as final and remain the official outcome of the poll

Accordingly, the Electoral Commission resolved to return the writs to His Majesty King Tupou VI on Friday, 28 November 2025. This formal act enabled the constitutional process for the election of the Prime Minister to proceed without delay.

Candidates' Election Expenses

Under Section 24(4) of the Electoral Act, every election candidate is required to lodge with the Commission a return of election expenses within 14 days after Election Day. By the prescribed deadline, 58 candidates had complied with this requirement. However, 13 candidates failed to submit their returns. Accordingly, the Commission referred these defaulters to the Attorney General for consideration and possible prosecution.

The candidates who failed to comply are as follows:

- **Tongatapu 1** : Éliesa Fifita
- **Tongatapu 6** : Dulcie Elaine Tei
- **Tongatapu 7** : Lute Finau
- **Tongatapu 8** : Johnny Grattan Vaea Taione
- **'Eua 11** : Tevita Lavemaau (*submitted his election expenses at a later day*)
Siukai Livai,
Silivia Loumaile Mahe
- **Ha'apai 12** : Sione F. Tapu
Pesimani Tavalu Fatafehi
Tevita Vaikona
Sione Foaki Fifita

- **Vava’u 14** : Tu’amelie Topui
- **Ongo Niua 17** : Vatau Mefi Hui

Election Petitions

Following the General Election, SIX Election Petitions were lodged with the Supreme Court challenging the election result: these Petitions related to the results in the following constituencies – Tongatapu 2, 9, and 10; ‘Eua 11; Vava’u 16; and Ongo Niua 17. Decisions from the Court are expected no later than April 2026.

Election Costs

Running an election is a significant financial undertaking. The Commission operates with an annual budget of **\$1,799,100** for the current financial year of which **\$400,000** was specifically earmarked for election-related expenses. In addition, the budget reflects donor support amounting to **586,900 pa’anga**.

The Commission gratefully acknowledged election contributions from Australia, the principal components of which were: -

- Printing of Handbooks for Candidates, Election Officials and Forms Books to ensure consistency of procedures on polling day;
- Provision of Polling Officials Vest and essential paraphernalia
- Payment for a Charter Flight to Niuatoputapu and Niuafóu for delivery of election equipment and training of polling staff;
- Payment for broadcasting across radio, television, and internet platforms, including TCC and Digicel networks, to enhance public awareness of the General Election.
- Support the development of an official election website to ensure timely and accessible dissemination of information, enabling voters to easily access updates, guidelines, and relevant materials.
- Trainings
- Deployment of AEC staff across the various stages of the election period, with a dedicated officer stationed at the TEC Office for four weeks, including polling day

The total value of Australia’s direct election contribution was in the order of **200,000 Pa’anga**.

New Zealand also was generous in its election support, with a total value of some **150,000 Pa’anga**. Principally this took the form of: -

- Signage (*identifying Polling Stations in each town and special parking signs for elderly and people with disabilities*).
- Training videos,
- Provision of Voting Screens
- Bull-ups signs
- Trainings
- Deployment of a staff (from Fiji Election Office) for about 3 weeks to assist with the general preparation of the election.

The Commission gratefully acknowledged New Zealand’s continuing support and the assistance from the Fiji Election Office.

Accordingly, the total cost of the election amounts to 643,778 Pa’anga. With an electorate of 64,707 registered voters on polling day, this translates to a per capita cost of 9.95 Pa’anga per elector—approximately 4 USD at prevailing exchange rates.

It is instructive to note that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in its 2006 publication *Cost of Registration and Elections*, reported that elections in “stable democracies” typically incurred operational costs ranging from USD 1 to 3 per voter, while “democracies in transition” faced higher costs in the range of USD 3 to 7.50.

The Commission considers the cost of this year’s General Election both necessary and reasonable. These expenditures are essential to ensure that elections in Tonga are conducted independently, impartially, and in a free, fair, and peaceful environment, fully aligned with the robust electoral processes expected in a democracy.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Electoral Commission acknowledges with gratitude the continuing support received from the Electoral Commissions of Australia and New Zealand, and the helpful assistance willingly granted by the High Commissioners of Australia, New Zealand, who are accredited to the Kingdom of Tonga. Their cooperation and encouragement have been invaluable in strengthening the Commission's capacity to deliver its objectives.

As always, the support of many within the Kingdom of Tonga was an essential ingredient in the successful delivery of the Commission's objectives. In particular, grateful thanks are due to:

- Key Ministries of the Government of Tonga, including Justice, Finance, and Internal Affairs
- Tonga Police and the Commissioner of Police
- The Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages
- The Lord Chief Justice of Tonga and the Registrar of the Supreme Court
- The Office responsible for National Identification Cards
- The Governors of Vava'u and Ha'apai and their staff
- Government representatives for 'Eua, Niuafu'ou, and Niuaotupapu
- District and Town Officers
- Civil society, community leaders, and the media

The Commission also wishes to record its profound gratitude to Mr. Pita Vuki, Supervisor of Elections, who retires following an outstanding career of 28 years and 7 months of distinguished service in the Government and the Electoral Commission. Throughout his tenure, Mr. Vuki has exemplified integrity, dedication, and professionalism, guiding the electoral process with wisdom and impartiality. His leadership has been instrumental in strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring that elections in the Kingdom of Tonga are conducted with fairness and credibility.