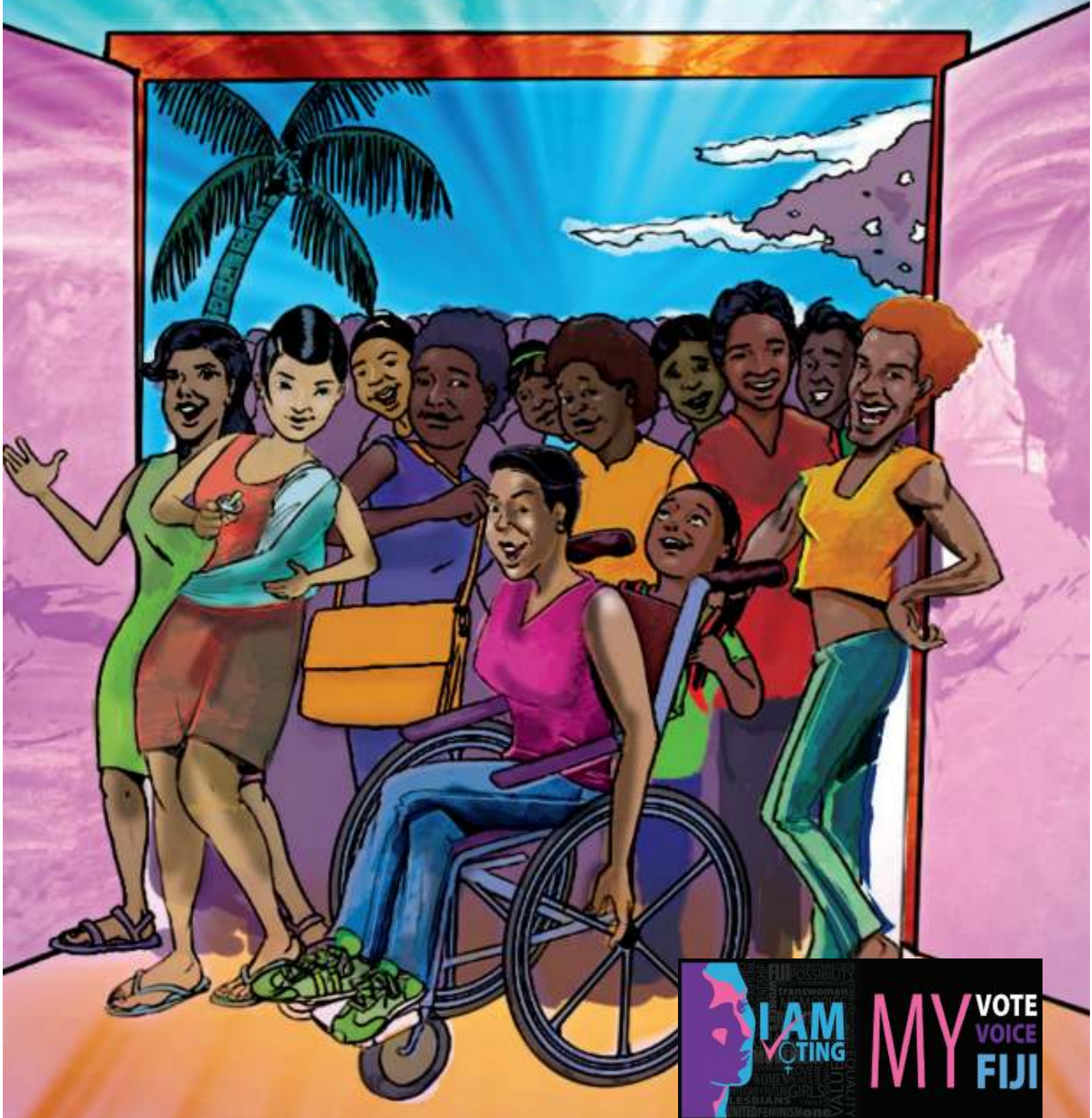


MY GUIDE to voting

Young Women's VOICES count.



MY GUIDE TO VOTING

Hi there! Are you 18 or older and planning on voting for the first time this year? We are too!

Elections can be a little bit overwhelming, but don't worry, we're here to go through it together!

Young Women's
Voices Count!



So... 2014 is an important year for Fiji because for the first time since 2006, there will be an election to choose our political leaders. Everyone in Fiji who is at least 18 and a citizen will have the chance to have a say in how the country is run. **Every single vote counts, INCLUDING YOURS!**

So how do you feel about elections and voting? Don't really understand how it works? Looking for more information? Maybe you think politics is boring or too complicated or not something young women should be involved in? If you answered YES to any of these questions, then this guide is for YOU!

Welcome to your own personal guide to voting!

Here we will take you on an election adventure where YOU make the decisions and choose what you do with your right to vote and YOU decide the future of your country.

Look out for the glossary where tricky words are explained; as well the checklists and other tools that may be useful in helping you make your decision.

LET'S GET STARTED!

2

ABOUT ME!

It starts with you! Everybody (as long as they are over 18), regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, or politics, has the **RIGHT TO VOTE***!

So
WHO
are you



My name is.....

I am

✓ *as many as you like and add more if you want!*

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> A student | <input type="checkbox"/> Straight |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Working | <input type="checkbox"/> Lesbian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Looking for work | <input type="checkbox"/> Bisexual |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A young single mother | <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A carer | <input type="checkbox"/> iTaukei |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Christian | <input type="checkbox"/> Indo-Fijian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hindu | <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Muslim | <input type="checkbox"/> European |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Person with disabilities | |

Whoever you are, you have the right to vote as an adult citizen of Fiji.

*The only exception to this is if you are serving a prison sentence of 12 months or more or if you have committed a crime relating to elections.

MY VALUES

Elections are about deciding what you want your Fiji to look like. What issues do you want the new leaders to focus on? Here's a chance to think about what you value.

Things that matter to me (these are just suggestions; add others if you want to):

as many as you like and add more if you want!

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Faith |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Human rights |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Equality | <input type="checkbox"/> Fiji's international relations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health | <input type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment | <input type="checkbox"/> Sport |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> The arts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Young Women's Leadership | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

SOME IMPORTANT WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

The language people use when talking about politics can be confusing. Here are a few useful expressions explained:

WORD	DEFINITION
Electoral decree	The law to be released by the state which will explain how the voting system will work and when the election will be held.
Electoral system	The way in which votes are translated into seats in parliament and the government formed.
Campaign	The organised effort of parties and candidates in the lead up to an election to convince people to vote for them.
Political party	A group of people with similar values who join together to attempt to influence law making or even to lead as the government of a country.
Independent candidate	A person who runs for election by themselves, without being attached to a party.
Manifesto	A public declaration of principles and policies which outlines what a party or candidate plans to do if there are successful in being elected to parliament.

WORD	DEFINITION
Secret ballot	System of voting in which each person goes into a separate booth so that their vote can be kept a secret.
Suffragettes	Women activists who fought to win the right to vote for women.
Policy	The principle of a party or candidate outlining how they will act in relation to a particular issue. Eg. An education policy might promise free text books to public school students.
Candidate	A person who is putting themselves forward to be elected to parliament.
Compulsory	Something that you must do.
Polling booth	Place where you go to vote in an election.

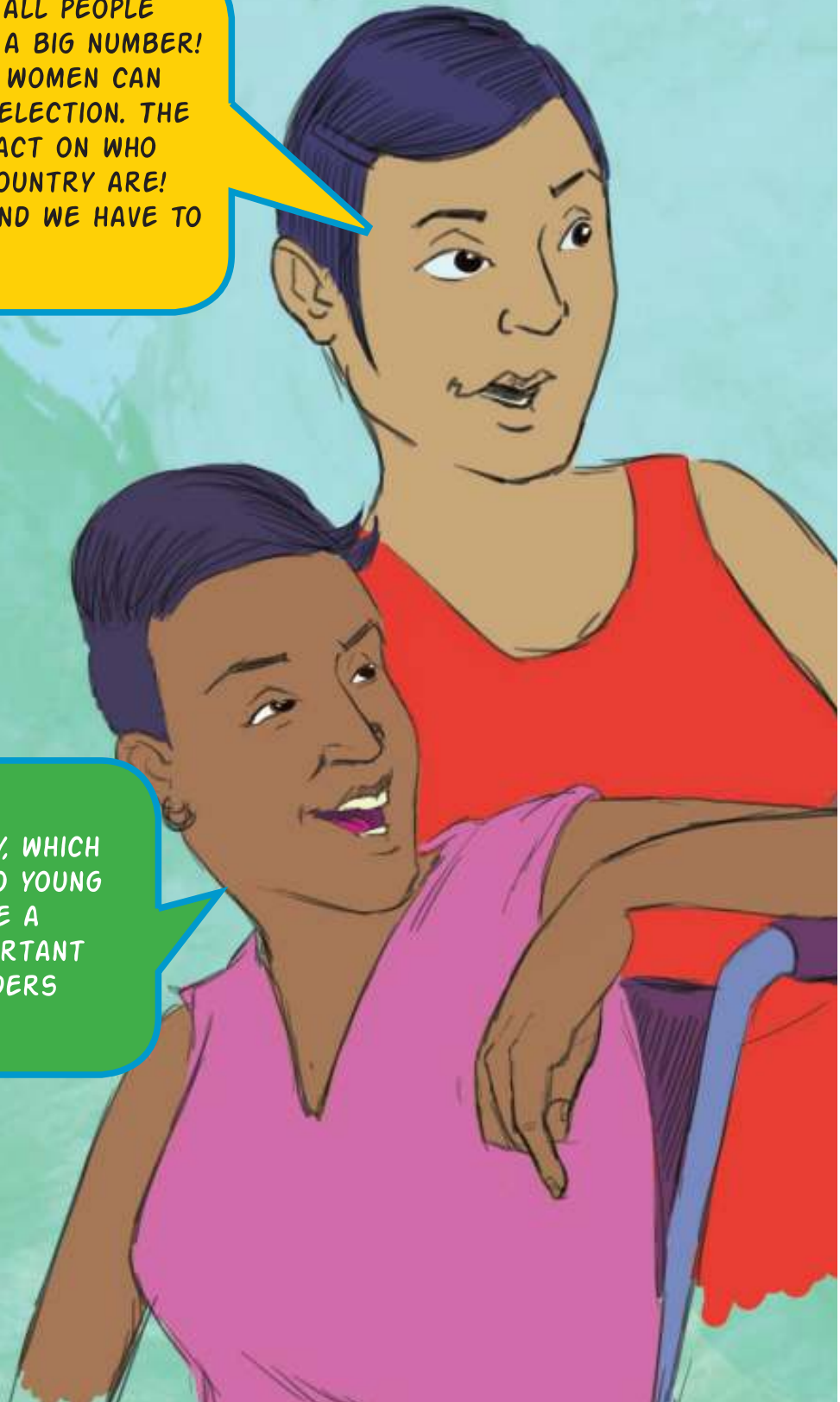
WORD	DEFINITION
Parliament	The forum in which all elected representatives sit to discuss and vote on new laws.
Prime Minister	The leader of the government.
Proportional voting	An electoral system in which the number of seats a party wins are directly in proportion to the number of votes they receive in an election.
Constitution	The highest law in a country which sets down the rules for how the government, parliament and judiciary (courts) must run.
Platform	The set of policies and promises of a candidate or party for which they seek to be elected.

WORD	DEFINITION
Cast a vote	To place your vote in the ballot box.
Informed decision	A decision you make after gathering enough information to have a clear understanding of your options and why you choosing one in particular.
Ballot box	The box into which your vote is placed to be counted.


REMEMBER!

YOUNG WOMEN MAKE UP 20% OF ALL PEOPLE WHO CAN VOTE IN FIJI - THAT IS A BIG NUMBER! THIS MEANS THAT WE AS YOUNG WOMEN CAN INFLUENCE THE RESULT OF THE ELECTION. THE WAY WE VOTE WILL HAVE AN IMPACT ON WHO THE FUTURE LEADERS OF THE COUNTRY ARE! THAT IS A BIG RESPONSIBILITY AND WE HAVE TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY!

THERE ARE SOME ISSUES, LIKE EDUCATION AND GENDER EQUALITY, WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO YOUNG WOMEN. WHEN WE VOTE, WE MAKE A STATEMENT ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US AND MAKE SURE OUR LEADERS TAKE THESE ISSUES SERIOUSLY!



AS YOU GET STARTED ON YOUR ELECTION JOURNEY, THERE IS ONE VERY SIMPLE, BUT VERY IMPORTANT THING THAT YOU NEED TO REMEMBER....
YOUR VOICE COUNT!



**SO DON'T FORGET...
OUR VOICES COUNT
AND THIS ELECTION
JOURNEY IS ABOUT
MAKING THEM HEARD!**

REMEMBER THE DATE!

ELECTION DAY!
WEDNESDAY 17TH
SEPTEMBER 2014
 7.30am - 6.00pm
 A PAID PUBLIC HOLIDAY

3 ways you can VOTE

1. Pre - Poll Voting

- In remote areas and locations where voter numbers are low such as parts of Lay Group, Lomaiviti Group; and
- Voters in disciplined forces, persons in health & nursing facilities or remand or prison

2. Postal Voting

- Will be available to overseas registered voters and to others that meet a strict criteria
- Applications must be received by the Supervisor of Elections no later than 6.00pm on 27 August 2014

3. Polling Day

- In person on *September 17th*

Election campaigning has STARTED. All of sudden the “election” is everywhere! It is all over the TV news, in the newspapers, on the radio. People talk about it at work, at home and in the streets. There is so much information flying everywhere as candidates try to convince you to vote for them.

It can be pretty confusing as you try to work out the difference between the candidates and the parties and to decide who you agree with and who you want to vote for.

What are you going to do?

The beginning of the election campaign is where you make your first decision. Are you going to get involved in the conversation about who should run the country, make an informed decision and vote? Are you going to ignore all this talk of elections and stay out of it? Or maybe you're not sure and you want some more information before you decide whether to vote or not.

If you have already decided not to vote, **go to page 17**

If you think that you are going to vote or you would like some more information before deciding then turn the page and keep reading!

GETTING STARTED: GATHERING INFORMATION

It is a good idea to get as much information as you can about the candidates who are running for election. This will mean that you are able to make an informed decision and be sure that you know who and what you are voting for.

It can be tricky though. In the lead up to an election there is information coming from television, radio, newspapers, online sources and also released by the political parties and candidates themselves. This is where you need to start making decisions about where you are going to get your information from and how you are going to use it!



You can get information from civil society organisations who will be running voter education campaigns (like this guide!) throughout the lead up to the election. An example is the Fiji Women's Rights Movement "*I am Voting*" campaign which has engaged women from all over Fiji to create awareness of voting rights. Other civil society organisations will have their own education campaigns too so keep an eye out as they are a really great way to get information!

Check out!

FWRM www.fwrn.org.fj

Fiji Young Women's Forum <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1379268645631468/>

Fiji Women's Rights Movement <https://www.facebook.com/FWRM1>

Fiji Women's Rights @FWRM1

Young Women's Forum @FJYWF

THE PUBLIC MEETING

You hear about a public meeting or a 'political rally' which is going to be held at the school hall near your home. A candidate is going to speak about what her policies are and this will be the opportunity to ask questions. You think the meeting will be useful and would like to go to learn more.

BUT maybe there are reasons why it is going to be difficult for you to go:

- You feel shy and think that you don't know enough about politics to go
- You have to work
- You have to study
- There is no disability access to the school hall
- Your parents will not give you permission to go
- You don't feel comfortable or safe attending
- You feel tired and want to get some sleep
- You are a single mother. You have to look after your children
-
-

Some of these things might be possible to overcome. Others are not so easy. Just remember that you don't have to know a lot about politics to get involved. The point of meetings like this is to help voters become informed and everyone has the right to attend, regardless of their personal background. So what do **you** do? **Choose your own path:**

- If you **DO** attend the meeting, **turn to page 11**
- If you **DO NOT** attend the meeting, **turn to page 12**



AT THE PUBLIC MEETING

At the public meeting the candidate gives a speech about the policies in her party's manifesto and tries to convince everyone present to vote for her. Afterwards some people ask questions.

You may like the way the candidate speaks and feel that her policies would be good for the country. On the other hand, you may dislike her suggestions and decide that you do not want to vote for her. Either way, at the meeting you get information which helps you form a view about who to vote for, and the sort of characteristics that you value in a candidate.

The public meeting is a good place to start, but it is just one way of getting information. Skip forward **to page 13** to find out how to learn more about political candidates and their policies.



YOU DIDN'T MAKE IT TO THE MEETING - WHAT NOW?

So you weren't able to make it to the meeting. As a result, you don't have the information that the candidate provided and you are still feeling unclear about what her policies are and who you should vote for.

Don't worry though – **you still have options!** Your election journey does not have to end here.

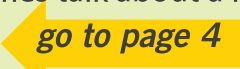
Make your decision....

If you decide that getting the information you need is too difficult and overwhelming and that you are going to give up on voting, **go to page 17**

If you are still interested and want to get information about the election another way, **go to page 13**



MANIFESTOS – WHAT ARE THEY AND HOW DO I USE THEM?

Politicians will sometimes talk about a manifesto when explaining their policies, but what exactly is a manifesto?  **go to page 4**

Manifesto can also be used to **hold candidates accountable** if something was promised in a manifesto, but **NOT** done after the election once they have been elected. If you have access to the manifesto of a successful candidate you can compare the principles contained in it with the actions of the candidate after the election.

But where can I find a manifesto? It is not always easy to access the manifesto of a political party or an independent candidate. The party's/candidate's website is a good place to start.

Where can I read a copy of your manifesto? If you are unable to find the manifesto of a candidate, this is something you can ask them about if you have the opportunity. As a voter you have the right to ask candidates if you can read their manifesto.

What do manifestos look like? Here are sections of the manifestos of two made-up parties. You can look at their policies, tick the ones you agree with and cross out the **ones** you disagree with.

Yellow Party	Blue Party
<input type="checkbox"/> More money to be spent on the military	<input type="checkbox"/> Reduced school fees for students in disadvantaged areas
<input type="checkbox"/> Focus on improving relations with Australia and New Zealand	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase the number of women in national decision-making positions
<input type="checkbox"/> Build new rural agricultural training centres	<input type="checkbox"/> Introduce stricter regulations to protect the environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all public school students have access to computers and the internet	<input type="checkbox"/> Raise the minimum wage
	<input type="checkbox"/> Improve legal aid services for people in need

“I would be more likely to vote for _____.”

FIJI YOUNG WOMEN'S FORUM DECLARATION

Check out the Declaration below that you can use as an advocacy document to lobby for young women's issues with candidates! The Fiji Young Women's Forum Declaration was the outcome of 3 days national forum. Declaration by Young Women for Young Women!!!

The Fiji Young Women's Forum convened by *Diverse Voices and Action for Equality (DIVA)*, *Emerging Leaders Forum Alumni (ELFA)*, *Young Women Producers and Broadcasters-FemlinkPacific*, and the *Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA)*, brought together young women leaders and activists aged 18 – 30 years from Fiji over two national forums to discuss barriers and strategies to young women's meaningful participation and representation in Fiji's democratisation process.

We, young Fijian women leaders, including *transwomen, young women with disabilities, young women of both religious and non-religious beliefs, young lesbian gay bisexual transgender queer and intersex women, aspiring young women politicians, young women sex workers, rural young women, young women mental health consumers and young women in ALL our diversities*, affirm our power as implementers and contributors of positive change, decision makers, partners and leaders of today and the future. Our strength is in our numbers and in our diversity.

This declaration is based on young women's lived realities and is drafted using feminist perspectives.

We call for immediate action to the following demands:

YOUNG WOMEN'S ACTIVE, MEANINGFUL, CIVIL AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The Fiji Young Women's Forum urges local and national governments, political parties and candidates, private and public sectors to implement Temporary Special Measures to increase young women's representation and participation in decision making.

Fiji Young Women demand of our leaders to ensure the promotion of substantive equality that protects the rights, interests and needs of all Young Women, regardless of sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

YOUNG WOMEN'S ACCESS to SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

The Young Women's Forum affirms that Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights must be realised.

Young women should have full ownership of our own bodies and sexual health, and are entitled to reproductive health rights and be free from all kinds of exploitation including forced commercial sexual exploitation.

YOUNG WOMEN ENSURE ACCOUNTABILITY and TRANSPARENCY

The Fiji Young Women's Forum affirms that Democracy, the Rule of Law and the full enjoyment of one's Human Rights are closely linked. We call upon the State, Political Parties and Candidates to adhere to the principles of democracy including the separation of powers between the executive, the judiciary and the legislative.

We highlight the importance of the role of the media in a sustainable democracy and call on political leaders to commit to the principles of Free media with a strong emphasis on balanced reporting and responsible journalism.

EDUCATION

Young Women demand a commitment to the review of the Fiji education system with particular emphasis on accessibility to the Girl Child and Young Women, regardless of disability, sexual orientation, identities and expressions.

The forum calls for affirmation action programs directed at the enhancement of Young Women's assistance in formal and informal education, and other opportunities that enhance Young Women development.

Together with effective policing, educators and leaders have the ability to eradicate sexual exploitation.

Schools are powerful social and cultural institutions in constructing gender identity as they have a major influence on girls and boys and how they see themselves and each other. We demand the promotion of high-quality gender identity and relations teaching and learning at all educational levels including early years settings (childcare and kindergartens).

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

We urgently seek full and decent employment and economic empowerment for all young Fijian women.

Young Women demand the promotion of young women to pursue education and employment in male dominated fields. The State must commit to the advancement of Young Women in self-employment initiatives and small businesses by providing necessary support and services including financial assistance, training and development, and access to markets, regardless of Young Women's status, location, and social standing.

YOUNG WOMEN in PEACE and SECURITY

Young Women's Human Security must be placed at the forefront by political parties and candidates. Putting Young Women's security first ensures gender inclusive development plans and processes from the local to the global level.

We call for the protection of women Human Rights defenders.

YOUNG WOMEN FOR JUSTICE CONCLUDING REMARKS:

We the Young Women of Fiji, call on the State's alignment to principles and processes of Free and Fair Elections, such as the levelling of the current unequal playing field and that rules and regulations are not oppressive to political parties and independent candidates. We demand that the elections process is transparent and that citizens, candidates and all other stakeholders are informed in a timely manner regarding electoral developments and law.

For the full Declaration please checkout <http://www.fwrn.org.fj/index.php/news/media-releases/2014/330-young-women-s-declaration>

16

Here are some places you can look...



The state as well as independent organisations will provide a lot of information about the election on their websites. Here are a few which might be useful.

- Fiji Women's Rights Movement – www.fwrn.org.fj
- Citizens' Constitutional Forum - www.ccf.org.fj
- Fiji Elections Office website - www.electionsfiji.gov.fj
- Fiji Government website - www.fiji.gov.fj

Ok so now you have a lot of information about the candidates and parties, and maybe you are starting to make up your mind about who you are going to vote for.

Turn to page 18 to continue on your election journey.

YOU DECIDED **NOT TO VOTE**

Voting is not compulsory in Fiji and there are a whole lot of reasons why young women **DO NOT** vote.

- ? Confusion about the system
- ? Lack of faith in politicians and politics
- ? Feeling intimidated
- ? Difficulty accessing a polling booth
- ? Lack of interest in politics

HOWEVER, just remember that if you **DO NOT** vote you are giving away *your right as a citizen to choose the people who represent you*.

Politicians make decisions which will directly affect your life. By **NOT** voting you are saying that you don't care who makes those important decisions about you, your family and your community.

By voting you show respect for fellow citizens by acknowledging that you are part of the Fiji community and you care about how it is managed.

If young women like **YOU** choose **NOT TO** vote then you will not have *people in the parliament protecting your interests and standing up for your rights*.

If you choose **NOT TO** vote your journey ends here.

BUT if you would like to reconsider your decision and give voting another go,

turn back to the Page 16 and keep reading!



WHAT MAKES A GOOD LEADER?

When you are deciding how to vote, you will probably be thinking about the sort of person that you want to lead the country. There are many different ways of being a good leader. Below is a list of some different leadership qualities.

- HONESTY** – Do you believe what the leader says?
- TRANSPARENCY** – Does the leader allow access to information which helps you to understand what is going on in the government and why certain decisions are made?
- INTEGRITY** – Does the leader stay true to her/his values and always behave in a way that is moral and ethical?
- NEGOTIATION SKILLS** – Is the leader good at reaching decisions with people from different political parties?
- COMPASSION** – Is the leader understanding and sympathetic to the challenges and problems faced by people in Fiji?
- GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS** – Is the leader easy to understand?
- RESPECT** – Does the leader respect the diversity of Fijian society?
- ACCOUNTABILITY** – Does the leader deliver the promises that s/he makes?
- INSPIRATION** – Does the leader make you feel excited and hopeful about the future of Fiji?

Which qualities would **YOU** most like to see in the next leaders of Fiji?

POLITICS – YOUNG WOMEN NEEDED?

Some people believe that young women should not be involved in politics because traditionally this has been men's role in society. During the lead up to the election you may hear people, maybe even members of your family, expressing opinions like this. You may notice that there are fewer women candidates running in the election and that women's opinions and issues receive less coverage in the media.

A herstory of fighting for space!

Women, particularly young women, have a history of being excluded from participating in politics. All over the world women suffragettes had to fight to be allowed to vote long after men were given this right. Today there are still fewer women than men representing

their fellow citizens and holding leadership positions. Women politicians and candidates receive less coverage in the media and are less likely to be interviewed by journalists about political issues. Often women who do enter politics are criticised for their appearance rather than their policies.

Because of all this, we get a strong message that there is no place for women in politics. Faced with this kind of discrimination it is easy to feel discouraged. So, it is here that you have another choice to make...

- If you give up and decide to keep out of politics and **NOT VOTE**, turn to page 17
- If you believe that there is a space for young women in politics and you would like to be able to tell people about it, turn to page 20 to read just some of the reasons why it is essential that young women's voices are heard!



YOUR VOICE REALLY COUNTS!

Young women are an important group in Fiji's society. We have unique and valuable experiences, perspectives and values. By voting as a young woman we are making sure that our perspectives are represented amongst the people who will be making big decisions for the country. For the new Fijian parliament to truly represent Fijian society, it is essential that young women be involved in electing the new members.

Young women (18-30 years) represent 15.2% of all people who have registered to vote in Fiji. This means that if **ALL YOUNG WOMEN VOTE, OUR** choices will affect the election result!

Everyone's vote is worth the same. As young women we are protected, under international and Fijian law, and have the same human rights as everyone else. Research shows that when **WOMEN VOTE, MORE WOMEN** candidates are elected and those women who are elected are the ones who will stand up and fight for the rights of women in Fiji. **Your rights and the rights of other young women** will be best protected if there are people for whom you voted representing you in Fiji's parliament!

We've got the power! *Everyone is equal!* *right to vote!*
free and fair elections



WHO YOU SHOULD VOTE FOR...

A problem comes up for many young women when someone else, maybe a family member, tells them who they must vote for. When we are placed in this position, often we follow the advice we are given, especially when we are voting for the first time. It is understandable that we want to follow the advice of people around us, but it is not the best thing for democracy.

Discussing politics with friends and family can be a really useful way of exchanging information, sharing ideas, and clarifying your thoughts about who to vote for. For democracy to work, each person must vote for the candidate they personally feel best represents their values and vision for the country. Political discussions with friends and family are important, but remember that no one can dictate who you must vote for and you have the right to keep your vote a secret.



You should vote for
.....

You should vote for
.....

I will vote for.....
because it's MY CHOICE

PRESSURE FROM FAMILY/FRIENDS/LEADERS TO MAKE YOU CHOOSE

BALLOT BOX

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

Now you are getting close to actually voting, it's time to talk about the “*electoral system*”

- **what is it?**
- **How will the votes of Fijian people be translated into a parliament which makes laws for the country?**

An electoral system is the system by which all the votes are collected, counted and translated into seats in parliament.

In its history, Fiji has had two different electoral systems....

First past the post: The candidate who receives more votes than any other wins (even if they don't receive more than 50% of votes).

Alternative voting: Voters number candidates in order of their preference. If one candidate does not receive more than 50%, the preferences from the candidates with the least votes are distributed until one candidate achieves more than 50%.

Fiji's new electoral system for 2014 is a **proportional representation system**. This system means that the ***number of seats that a party or candidate wins in parliament directly reflects the percentage of votes they received in an election.*** For example, if a parliament had 50 seats* and Party A won 30% of the vote, then in a proportional representation system, Party A would win 15 seats.

More information is available about how the system will work and exactly how to vote by the Fiji Elections Office. Check out their website for more information

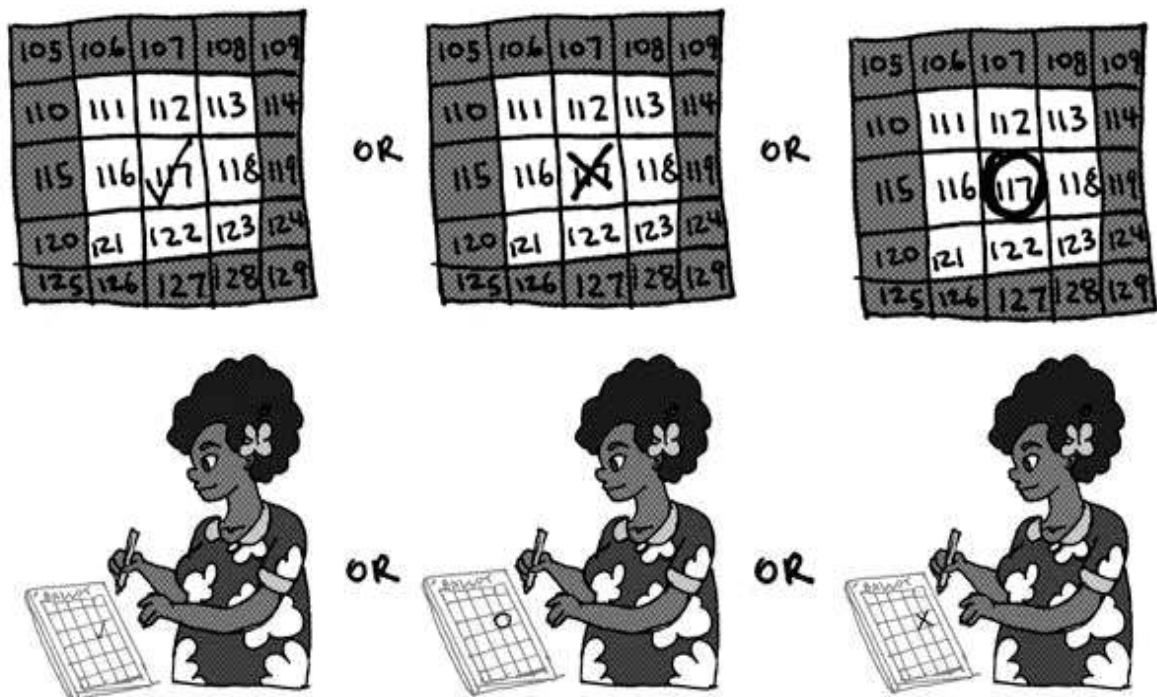
www.electionsfiji.gov.fj

HOW TO MARK YOUR BALLOT PAPER

- Every candidate standing for office in the election will be randomly assigned a three-digit number one month before the election.
- The ballot paper will contain every candidate's number.
- Every voter will be given a Voters Instruction Booklet which includes a national candidates list.
- To vote for a candidate you circle, cross or tick his or her number.
- You will not be able to bring any sort of sample ballot paper, card or instruction on how to vote into the polling station.

<http://www.electionsfiji.gov.fj/how-to-cast-your-vote/>

WHAT IS VALID MARKING ON BALLOT PAPER?

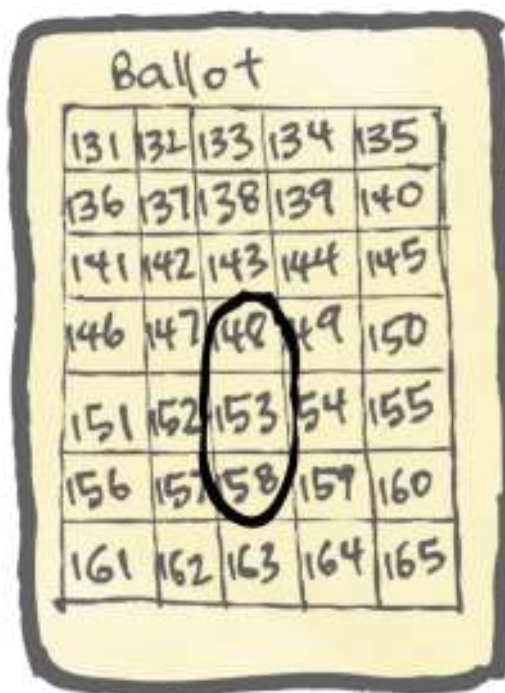


4 Source: <http://www.electionsfiji.gov.fj/how-to-cast-your-vote/>

WHAT MAKES YOUR VOTE INVALID?

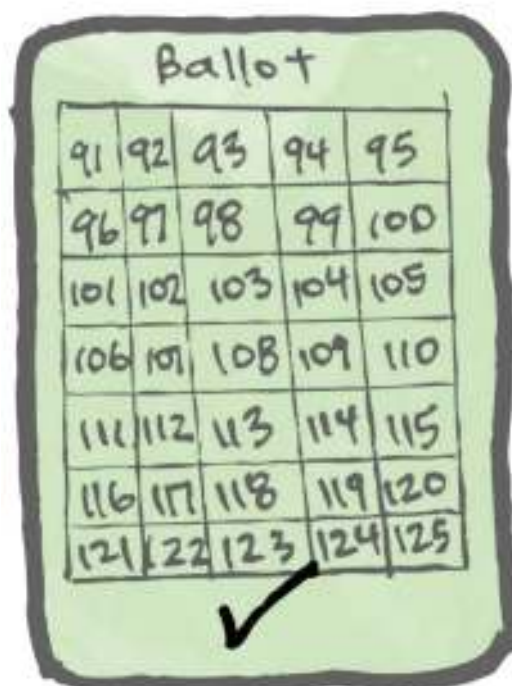
Example 01:

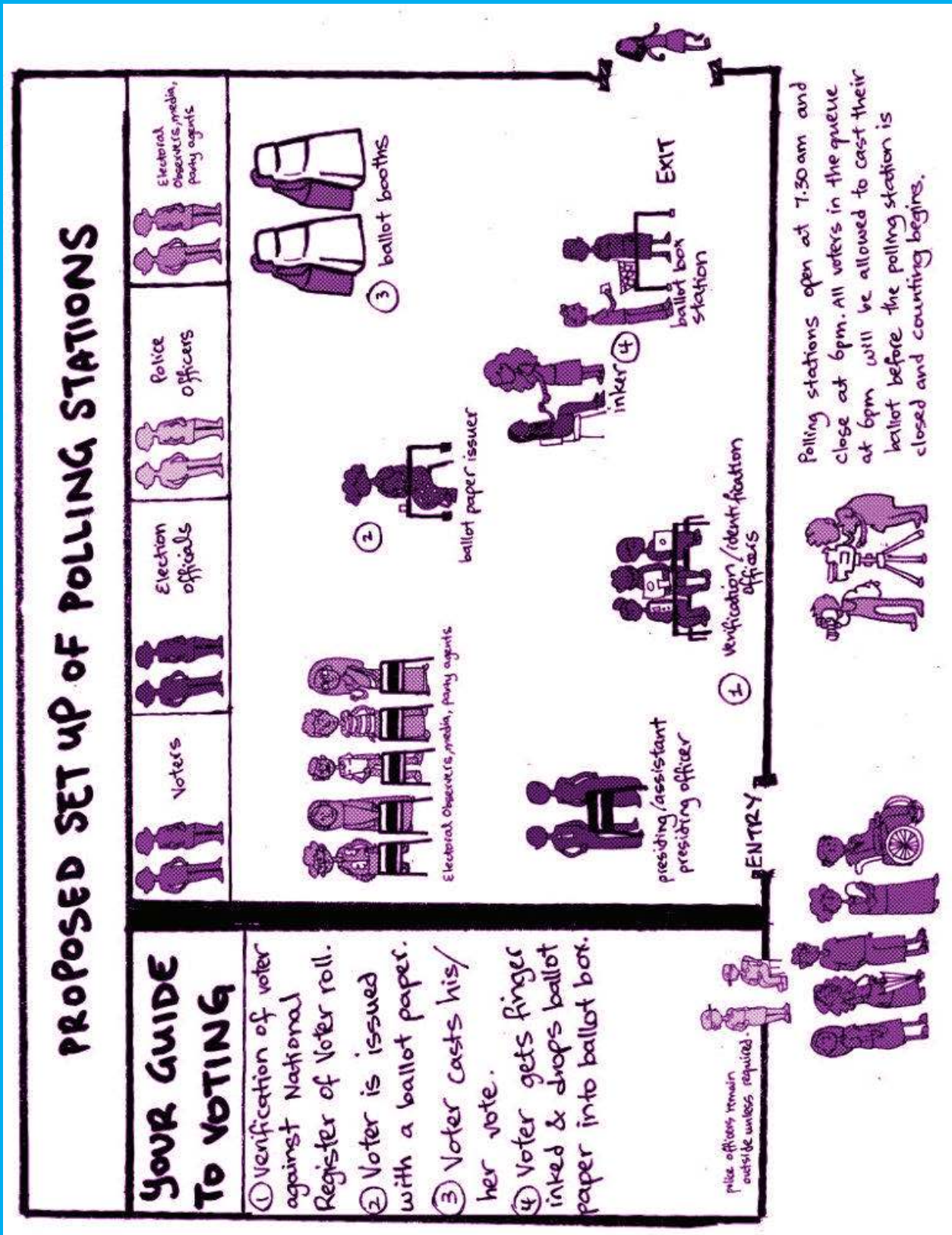
if you make a valid mark on more than one number such as this



Example 02:

if you make any kind of marking outside the frame and not on the numbers such as this:





HOW TO CAST YOUR VOTE

- On Election Day, you will go to your assigned polling station between the hours of 7.30am and 6.00pm. You must make sure you are standing in the voter queue before 6.00pm or you will not be allowed to vote.
- You must bring your voter identification card with you.
- If you forget your voter ID and do not have another valid form of ID, you will still be allowed to vote but it will take longer because you will have to verify your personal details and have your thumbprint taken.
- Once you have been identified and your name has been crossed off the voter list, you will be given a ballot paper and asked to sign next to your name on the voter list.
- You will then take your ballot paper into a private voting booth.
- Once in the polling booth you will either put a tick, circle or cross on the number that corresponds to the candidate of your choice and then fold the ballot paper. Voting is conducted in total privacy. No one can see who you vote for, and no one can tell you who to vote for.
- As you leave the booth, an Election Official will mark one of your fingers with ink that cannot be rubbed off. This is a simple way to prevent cheating by stopping anyone who tries to vote twice under different names. (Don't worry; the ink is designed to fade after a couple of days.)
- Finally, once you have had your finger inked, you will place your ballot into a secure ballot box and exit the polling station.
- While you are in the polling station, you will not be able to talk to anybody except Elections Officials wearing official badges. You will also not be able to use your mobile phone, camera or any other electronic device.
- If you witness what you believe to be any breach in polling procedure, unlawful campaign activity, or illegal interference with the rights of a voter, you may submit a written complaint to the presiding officer during the hours of polling.

VOTE COUNTING BASICS

1. **Candidates:**

- a. 5 registered political parties
- b. 1 proposed independent candidate
- c. Each party can have maximum of 50 candidates

2. **Registered Voters:**

- a. There are about 550,000 registered voters in Fiji

3. **Parliament:**

- a. There will be 50 elected members to the Parliament

4. **The 5% threshold:**

- a. $\frac{550,000 \times 5}{100} = 27,500$
- b. Political parties and independent candidates must have 27,500 votes in order to qualify
- c. If they get less than 27,500 votes they will be eliminated

5. **Valid Voting by marking the 3-digit number on ballot paper with a:**

- a. Cross
- b. Tick
- c. Circle

6. **How will the government be formed:**

- a. The party that has $25 + 1 = 26$ seats or more

SO WE MADE IT! THE ELECTION HAS ARRIVED! Hopefully after all this preparation, you have made up your mind about who to vote for and **you're ready to go!**

Here are some **Dos** and **Don'ts** to help you prepare to go and vote...

- DO** work out where you are going to vote before the election happens
- DO** check your registration to make sure your details are correct. This can be done online at <http://www.verifyme.gov.fj> or in person at the Fiji Elections Office.
- DO** visit the Fiji Elections Office website to get extra information: <http://www.electionsfiji.gov.fj/>
- DO** remember to take your voter registration card
- DO** go to the voting place with friends and family if it helps you to feel comfortable
- DO** inform your employer of your intention to vote.
- DO** remember that it is your right to vote and who you vote for is your choice!
- DON'T** tell anyone who you are voting for unless they are someone you trust and you want to tell them
- DON'T** let anyone pressure you into voting for any particular candidate
- DON'T** go into the voting booth with anyone else, you must go in alone

People with access to internet can also check their voter details on the elections office website. Others can get it physically checked.

<http://www.verifyme.gov.fj/>



***YAY!! I HAVE A PLAN!!.....
NOW I KNOW HOW TO VOTE!!!!***

MY ELECTION PLAN!

When you are prepared and ready to vote, here is a space for you to fill in some details and make some plans about what is going to happen on Election Day for you!

- The place where I am going to vote is.....
- I am going to get there by.....(how will you get there?)
- I am going to go to vote on..... (which day) atam/pm (what time)
- I am going to go to vote by myself/with.....(who are you going to go with?)
- I have my voter registration card and I am ready to go! (tick box)

WHERE YOU WILL VOTE

Every registered voter will be assigned to a polling station that is close to where they live. You must vote at this polling station and this polling station only.

The locations of the polling stations will be published in the newspapers and broadcast on radio and free-to-air television, at least thirty days before Election Day.

The Elections Office will conduct an extensive public education drive to make sure all voters know what polling station they have been assigned to before Election Day.

<http://www.electionsfiji.gov.fj/how-to-cast-your-vote/>

It doesn't end here! When a new government is elected, it is very important that young women like us remain interested and engaged in the conversation about the direction that the country is carried in.

Elected representatives need to be held accountable for their actions and you can do this by staying involved, writing letters to newspapers or politicians themselves, attending political rallies, and signing petitions. You may even like to join a political party or an organisation that supports issues that you are passionate about. It is up to you, you have the power, as a young woman, to have your voice heard and by voting in the election you've made a great start!



Technical contents written by Julia Parkin & Professor Wadan Narsey

Illustrations: by Tui Ledua & Sian Rolls



This publication has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

Supported By



FWRM
FIJI WOMEN'S RIGHTS MOVEMENT

iwda

international
women's development
agency inc.



Global Fund
for Women



**CONCILIATION
RESOURCES**
working together for peace