

# Pacific Islands Brief

**PIDP** Pacific Islands Development Program

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## A New Electoral System for Fiji in 2014: Options for Legitimate Representation

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### Introduction

From the time of Fiji's independence in 1970, the country has struggled to adopt an electoral system that adequately caters for its multi-ethnic society, which is predominantly indigenous Fijian or Indo-Fijian. The political struggle between the two main ethnic groups, and within the ethnic groups, has resulted in coups in 1987 (twice), 2000, and 2006.<sup>1</sup> In the first 1987 coup, and again in 2000, the uprisings were led by indigenous Fijian nationalists who were opposed to recent election results and the level of government power held by Indo-Fijians (in 2000, Fiji was led by its first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry). As a result of the 2006 coup, Fiji continues to be under the control of a military regime, led by Commodore Voreqe (Frank) Bainimarama.

Following the coup, Bainimarama promised democratic elections would be held in 2008. However post-coup elections are yet to be held. Bainimarama has subsequently stated that elections will now be held in 2014. While having a gap of at least eight years between elections is tragic for the Fijian people, this hiatus does provide an opportunity to devise an electoral system that ameliorates ethnic relations in the country. The Constitution Commis-

sion of Fiji is currently undergoing a consultative process ahead of drafting a new constitution for the country, which will include the basis of a new electoral system for Fiji.<sup>2</sup>

Since independence, Fiji has used a bicameral system of parliament, with a House of Representatives and a Senate. The Senate has been an appointed body, largely composed of nominees from the Great Council of Chiefs, Prime Minister, and Opposition.

### The Use of First-Past-the-Post in Fiji

From 1970 to the 1987 coups, Fiji used the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system for its House of Representatives elections, electing members from single-member ethnic constituencies, but using a mix of ethnic and multi-ethnic electoral rolls. Because FPTP requires voters to express a single choice on the ballot paper, it is a relatively easy system for voters to understand, and the counting of votes and the declaration of results can occur quite quickly – this can be an important consideration when the legitimacy of an election is being questioned, and where there is the potential for violence and civil disruption if results are delayed.

One of the main drawbacks of FPTP is that candidates can be elected with a small percentage of the overall vote. This often occurs where there are many candidates contesting the election, and where the support is dispersed between candidates. In multi-party or multi-candidate elections, it is typical that winning candidates may receive far less than fifty percent of the total vote, bringing into question whether the successful candidates have a sufficient mandate to represent their constituents. It also means that a large majority of voters may be likely to vote for a losing candidate, creating disillusionment and anger about the democratic experience.

### Ethnic Seats

Fiji's use of ethnic constituencies from 1970 to 1987 was essentially an attempt to provide a degree of proportionality under a majoritarian FPTP system, which typically delivers disproportionate results. At each of the five national elections held during this period, 52 members were elected, comprised of 22 members representing the indigenous ethnic group; 22 representing the Indo-Fijian ethnic group; and a further eight representing the General community – such as Asian, European, and other minorities. The majority of these seats were elected by voters from the same ethnic community. However, in an attempt to foster cross-ethnic cooperation, 23 of the 52 seats (ten each of the indigenous and Indo-Fijian seats, and three of the General seats) were elected from the national roll.

The result was that each voter would cast four votes – one for the representative of their own ethnic group, and one each for the three ethnic groups – indigenous, Indo-Fijian, and General – from the national roll. Confusing and complicated perhaps, but it was a form of electoral engineering that took into account the ethnic divisions within the country, and at the one time, attempted to accommodate and diffuse the ethnic tensions that exist.

Following the twin Rabuka coups of 1987, a new constitution was introduced in 1990 to protect the interests of indigenous Fijians. The constitution stated in part that “the 1970 Constitution was inadequate to give protection to the interests of indigenous Fijians, their values, traditions, customs, way of life and economic well being” (Larmour 1997, 1).

This constitution underpinned two national elections, held in 1992 and 1994, again using FPTP. However, the ethnic mix was altered in line with the new constitution's intent. The expanded House of Representatives of 70 members consisted entirely of ethnically-based seats. The mix was 37 seats allocated for indigenous Fijians, 27 for Indo-Fijians, five for General (other ethnic minorities), and one for the Rotuman community.<sup>3</sup> The Senate expanded from 22 members to 34, but remained a fully-appointed house. The use of entirely ethnic-based voting suppressed any attempts at cross-ethnic collaboration, and discouraged political parties from adopting policies that would appeal to

supporters beyond their own core ethnic support base. As a result, the pro-indigenous Fijian parties dominated the 1992 and 1994 elections, and Sitiveni Rabuka continued as Prime Minister.

Rabuka did acknowledge the divisions being created by the constitution, and with the support of prominent Indo-Fijian MPs Jai Ram Reddy and Mahendra Chaudhry, initiated a constitutional review process. The review considered various options for a new electoral system,<sup>4</sup> with the result being a move away from FPTP to an Alternative Vote (AV) system. Under AV (also known as preferential voting, and as instant run-off voting), voters express their preferences for all candidates, ranking them from 1st, 2nd, 3rd, etc, through to the final

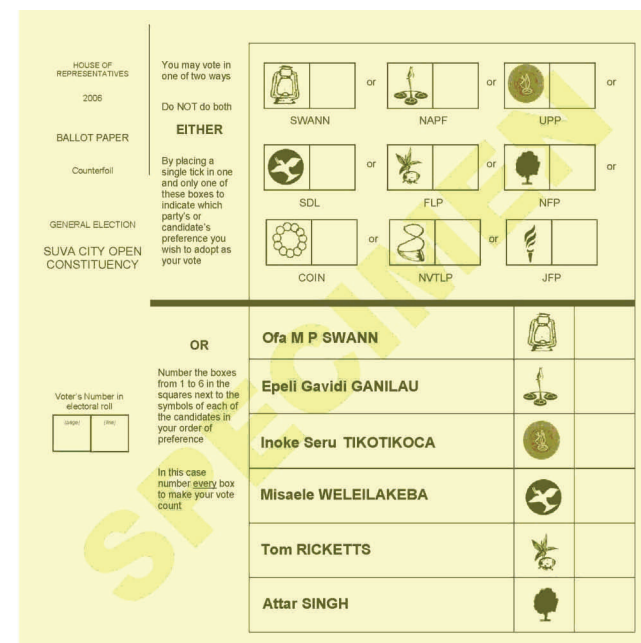


Figure 1. Fiji Ballot Paper – 2006

candidate.<sup>5</sup>

The new system retained a form of ethnic division, but moderated from the extremes of the previous version. Under the new system, the House of Representatives was expanded slightly to 71 seats, with 46 seats reserved for ethnic groups – 23 for indigenous Fijians, 19 for Indo-Fijians, three for General ethnic groups, and one for Rotumans. The advance for multi-ethnic co-operation was in 25 seats being allocated for Open voting, with members elected from the combined, multi-ethnic general roll. The Senate reduced slightly from 34 to 32 members, and remained fully-appointed. The most significant change was that indigenous Fijians were no longer assured of a majority of the seats in the House of Representatives.

This new model was used for the 1999 general election, with the most significant result being the election of Chaudhry as the country's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister in 1999. Chaudhry's party, the Fiji Labour Party (FLP), won 37 seats, a majority in the

SEATS	2001		2006	
	FLP	SDL	FLP	SDL
Indigenous Fijian		18		23
Indo-Fijian	19		19	
General		1		
Open	8	13	12	13
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36</b>

Table 1. Fiji Election Results for FLP and SDL, 2001-2006

Year	Total Candidates	Women Candidates	% Women Candidates	Total No. of Seats	Women Elected	% Women Elected
2001	351	31	8.8	71	5	7.0
2006	338	27	8.0	71	8	11.3

Table 2. Women In Fiji Elections, 2001-2006

House. The FLP won all the Indo-Fijian ethnic seats, and more importantly, 18 of the 25 Open seats. Unfortunately, this was also the motivating factor for the coup of 2000, led by indigenous Fijian George Speight. Following the failure of the Speight coup, elections using this system were also held in 2001 and 2006. However in these elections, the pro-indigenous Fijian Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua party (SDL or United Fiji Party), led by Laisenia Qarase, was able to prevail. In 2006, both the FLP and SDL achieved about 80 percent of the vote within their own ethnic-based seats. This vote share translated to the Open seats, where the numerically stronger indigenous Fijian community supported SDL with 44 percent, edging out the FLP's 40 percent. How this translated to seats in parliament is illustrated in Table 1.

### Women in Fiji Elections

Fiji has had a consistent, but small number of women elected at recent elections. Three women were elected (out of 70 seats) using the FPTP system in 1994. Under the Alternative Vote system used at the three most recent elections, a total of 21 women were elected (eight in 1999; five in 2001,

and eight in 2006). These results equate to representation of women of four to 11 percent of elected seats. In overall numbers, there is a reasonable correlation between the number of women standing for election, and the number elected (see Table 2).

In terms of election participation, while women make up less than ten percent of candidates, their success rates differ markedly depending on the political party they represent. For example, in 2006 although the SDL only nominated five women out of a total 79 candidates, all five women were elected. The FLP nominated seven women (of 59 candidates), and two were successful. The only other woman elected was from the United Peoples Party (UPP), which nominated two women among their ten candidates. This indicates the influence and importance that parties may play in getting women elected under Fiji's Alternative Vote system.

### A Possible New Electoral System for Fiji

Proposing a new electoral system for when Fiji returns to an elected democracy may appear idealistic under the present circumstances. However, to be less than idealistic would be a disservice to Fiji-

ans and the broader Pacific community. At the same time, designers of constitutions and electoral systems need to be realistic about managing the ethnic mix in Fijian society.

A need for the protection of Indigenous Fijian interests through an engineered electoral system is no longer necessary. Previous electoral systems and the civil turmoil that has occurred since independence in 1970 have ensured that Indigenous Fijians are now numerically dominant. The 1996 census calculated that Indo-Fijians made up 43.6 percent of the total Fijian population, and it was estimated that this would decline to less than 40 percent by 2002 (Lal 2006, 1 and 240). The 2007 census put the Indo-Fijian population at 37.6 percent. Conversely, the Indigenous Fijian proportion of the population has grown from 42 percent in 1966, to 46 percent in 1986, and 57.3 percent in 2007. While a lower birth rate in the Indo-Fijian community partially explains this declining proportion, the more significant factor is emigration, with more than 80,000 Indo-Fijians leaving the country between 1987 and the early 2000s (Lal 2006, 247).

This shifting demographic mix has heightened the need for an electoral system that facilitates – but not necessarily protects – the representation of minority interests in parliament (whether or not these minority interests are ethnically based). There is a real danger that minority interests will be subjected to the ‘tyranny of the majority’ in any democratic Fijian society.

The design of a new electoral system for Fiji must focus on two essentials. First, a *voting system* that fairly translates votes to seats in parliament, while ensuring that significant minorities (primarily the Indo-Fijian community) are adequately represented. Second, a *political party system* that freely allows parties to actively engage in the roles that are common among democratic societies – such as aggregating the interests of the public, developing policy options, training political leaders, and contesting elections. Other important issues, such as the formation of government and developing a strong and robust constitution, while important, are beyond the scope of this paper.

### Electoral System Options

There are a variety of electoral systems that Fiji can choose from for its new democracy; all have their benefits and drawbacks. The following section briefly describes some options available. These are split into the two main families of electoral systems – majoritarian (also known as plurality systems) and proportional (including semi-proportional and mixed systems).<sup>6</sup>

#### Majoritarian

Majoritarian systems are used in democracies with single-member electorates. In these systems there tends to be a strong connection between voters and their sole elected representative. However, it is far more difficult to achieve results that proportion-

ally represent voters’ choices overall.

***First-Past-the-Post*** (FPTP) – voters make a single choice of their preferred candidate in a single-member electorate. The candidate with more votes than any other is elected.

Benefits: a simple system that is easily understood by voters, and counted quickly. There is a direct relationship between the elected member and constituents, with an expectation that the elected member will represent the constituents’ interests. FPTP encourages fewer parties, and as a result, majority government (and political stability) is more likely.

Drawbacks: A candidate can win with less than an absolute majority of votes. This means that in some cases a majority of voters have supported losing candidates (sometimes referred to as wasted votes), leading to disenchantment with the system. Minority interests are not fairly represented. A party with a small majority of votes in many seats can achieve a disproportionately large number of seats in parliament.

***Preferential*** (also known as *Alternative Vote*) – also for single-member electorates, preferential voting allows voters to make further choices in the event that the highest-polling candidate does not achieve an absolute majority of votes. Voters indicate their preferred candidates, from their most preferred (No. 1), next preferred (No. 2), etc. The second

preferences of the lowest-polling candidate are distributed until a candidate achieves an absolute majority of votes. AV systems can include full preferential (where it is compulsory for voters to number preferences for all candidates), limited preferential (a specified number of preferences – e.g. 1, 2, and 3 only), or optional preferential (the voter decides how many preferences they wish to indicate).

**Benefits:** A greater proportion of voters will vote for the winning candidate, either as their first or later choice. Candidates and parties are more likely to moderate their policies and to negotiate with each other, to attract second and third preferences from other candidates' supporters.

**Drawbacks:** Counting of votes takes longer than with FPTP because of the need to distribute preferences until an absolute majority is achieved. The leading candidate after the first preference count may be surpassed by a lower polling candidate who picks up a greater number of second and third preferences – this can lead to confusion and anger amongst voters.

### **Proportional**

Proportional representation (PR) systems are used to achieve a higher correlation between voters' choices and their elected representatives by using multi-member electorates, usually based on a provincial, regional, or national electorate. The more members being elected from a single electorate

(the magnitude), the more proportional the result is likely to be. Electorates are necessarily larger than for single-member electorates, and therefore the connection between voters and their representatives can be reduced – however, there is a greater likelihood that there will be an elected representative who aligns with a voter's particular views. It is also less likely that a single party will achieve a majority of seats, and therefore governments may be less stable. However, the need to form alliances and coalitions can assist in the formation of governments that represent a wide range of interests.

**Single Non-Transferable Vote** (SNTV) – this is essentially the use of FPTP in multi-member electorates. Each voter makes a single choice and the highest-polling candidates, equivalent to the seats available, are elected. The proportionality of SNTV systems is largely dependent on the number of members being elected.

**Benefits:** Allows for the representation of minority interests. Voters can make a choice between multiple candidates from the same party. Counting is quick and easily understood.

**Drawbacks:** A high level of proportionality is difficult to achieve in electorates with a low magnitude. In electorates with a high magnitude and many candidates, representatives can be elected with relatively low numbers of votes.

**List PR** – electors vote for a political party, and

each party provides a list of candidates. Members are elected from the party lists, in proportion to the votes each party receives. The order of election may be based on the order determined by the party (a closed-list system), or by voters' choices within the party list (an open-list system).

**Benefits:** A high correlation (proportionality) in the translation of voters' choices to elected representatives. It is a relatively simple system for voters, who make a single party choice. Parties can include higher levels of women and minorities in 'safe' positions on their lists.

**Drawbacks:** Internal party processes have a significant influence on who is elected (especially in closed-list systems). Elected members do not have a 'local' constituency to represent.

**Single Transferable Vote** (STV) – instead of making a single choice as with List PR, voters express preferences after their first choice. A quota is calculated, based on the number to be elected (e.g. 16.7 percent in a 5-member electorate).<sup>7</sup> Preferences may be decided by the voter, or by the voter deferring the order of preferences to his/her choice of party, where, prior to the election, the party lodges a pre-determined list of preferences – a 'ticket.'

**Benefits:** Parties are forced into negotiating with each other, and moderating their policies, to secure the preferences of other parties. In open-list STV

systems, voters can choose their preferences within a party’s list of candidates, or preference candidates from different parties.

Drawbacks: STV can be a difficult system to explain to voters. Counting in electorates with high numbers of candidates can be time-consuming and complicated.

**Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP)** – MMP is a mixture of single-member electorates and a proportional-based party vote. Voters elect a local member (using FPTP or AV), and also vote for a party. In a ‘parallel’ MMP system, the party vote is used to determine the number of members elected from a party’s list, irrespective of how many party members have won single-member electorates. This means the final composition of parliament may not be proportional.<sup>8</sup> In a true MMP system, the party vote will determine the final composition, with party lists used to ‘top-up’ the number of single-member electorate members, to achieve a final result as proportional to voters’ party choices as is possible. Typically the local, single-member electorates constitute 50-75 percent of the total composition of the legislature in MMP systems.

Benefits: Voters elect a ‘local’ representative. Elections are fought on a combination of local issues and party platforms. Election outcomes can be determined relatively quickly.

Drawbacks: Minority government is more likely,

relying on alliances. Determination of who is in government can be confusing and time-consuming post-election. The roles of MPs can be confused – between representing a local constituency and representing a party.

It will be important for the Fijian people to decide the most important attributes of a new electoral system. For example, the importance of simplicity, local representation, a strong party system, stable government, protection of minority interests, or a direct correlation between votes and results. No single electoral system will deliver all this, as Table 3 shows.

### A New Fijian Voting System

Fiji has used majoritarian electoral systems since independence. Using either FPTP or AV, voters elect a single member for each electorate. It can be argued though that Fiji has actually experienced multi-member electorates, in the form of an overlay of various ethnic and open single-member seats representing a single geographic area. The past forty years of engineered electoral systems has not produced the desired result of reducing ethnic conflict in Fijian politics. It can be said however, that the electoral systems to date have achieved the aims of certain indigenous Fijian political elites, in

Electoral System	Simplicity for Voters	Local Representation	Protection of minority interests	Proportionality of results
<b>Majoritarian</b>				
FPTP	√√√	√√√	XXX	XXX
Preferential				
Full pref.	√	√√√	X	X
Limited pref.	√√	√√√	XX	XX
Optional pref.	√√	√√√	XX	XX
<b>Proportional</b>				
SNTV	√√√	√	√	√
List PR	√√√	XXX	√√√	√√√
STV	√	√	√√	√√
MMP (parallel)	√	√	√√	√√
MMP (top-up)	√√	√	√√	√√√

Table 3. Electoral System Options<sup>9</sup>

protecting indigenous interests ahead of the interests of other ethnic groups, and at the expense of the greater national interest.

The use of a majoritarian system of single-member electorates, but without an overlay of ethnic seats, is also unsuitable for the Fijian situation, as such a system ensures that many voters will feel they do not have an MP representing their specific interests. Given the history of ethnically-based parties in the country, it can be expected that the dominant ethnic group in an electorate will be successful, while ethnic minorities would feel isolated and unrepresented. In single-member electorates, especially in ethnically-divided societies, certain ethnic groups may not seek help from their local member if that member is from a different ethnic group.

The alternative is to choose an electoral system based on proportional representation. A recommendation of the Constitution Review Commission in 1996 was for three-member seats, but based on the AV voting system, where the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd preferences of voters would be added together before the lowest-polling candidate was eliminated (Lal 1997, 63). Although this recommendation was not ultimately adopted, it also is unsuitable for Fiji (or any other democracy), as it does not prevent highly disproportional results from occurring.

The use of a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system, as used in New Zealand and Germany, was also considered. Under MMP, every voter gets two

votes – a party vote, and a local electorate vote. MMP combines the use of single-member electorate seats (voters' local member), with a party list, from which candidates are elected to ensure (as closely as possible), that the final make-up of the parliament is proportional to voters' party votes. However, in 1996 MMP had only recently been introduced for New Zealand, and without a regional example with a history of results, this was not seen as a solution for the Fijian situation. Now that MMP has been used for six general elections, there may be greater interest in adopting this system for Fiji. The danger could be however, introducing the MMP system after an eight-year hiatus in political party activity. In preparation for a 2014 election, it would be difficult to predict the relative strengths of parties, and how MMP may operate (especially in establishing a suitable threshold level for a party to gain representation).

Another proportional system to be considered (and this author's preference) is the Single Transferable Vote (STV). STV is essentially modifying the AV system for use in multi-member electorates. As the name suggests, each voter has one vote, which flows on to other preferred candidates until all seats have been filled. STV is used as a proportional system where the jurisdiction is broken into smaller, multi-member electorates. It is not widely used, but examples include Ireland, Malta, the Australian Senate, and at the Australian sub-national level. STV would essentially have the effect of encapsulating Fiji's previous systems of an overlay of

open and ethnic seats, combining them into one, heterogeneous seat. If three-member electorates were used, these would be roughly equivalent to the size of the ethnic seats previously used. Five-member (or even seven-member) electorates would obviously need to be larger, but would have the advantage of increasing the possibility of achieving greater proportionality of results.

STV systems use either open or closed party lists. With open party lists, voters can select their preferred candidates from those that the party puts forward. In systems using closed party lists, each party puts forward its list of candidates. Electors vote for a party, and candidates are elected in the order of the party list. The closed list system bestows far more power with the parties, in the process of ranking candidates on the list. It is preferable to leave voters with the ability of deciding their preferred candidates – the ballot paper design for this in three- or five-member electorates is relatively simple and easy for voters to follow – especially where voters do not have to preference all candidates (for example, only preference as many candidates as there are seats to be won).

An argument against multi-member seats is that the geographically larger seats can reduce access to the 'local member.' Typically though, the reality for Fiji is that at least two and possibly more parties would win seats in a five-member electorate. This increases the likelihood of a voter being able to connect with an MP in their electorate whom they



believe is empathetic to their concerns. In addition, parties will ensure that their MPs service areas of need in the electorate, and conversely, constituents have a choice of MPs to approach with their concerns and issues.

Five-member seats would be the preferred magnitude of seat size for Fiji – sufficiently large to allow opportunities for minor parties to achieve some representation, which also mitigates against the possibility of one party dominating parliament; and yet small enough for voters and parliamentarians to retain a sense of local representation. Such a proportional representation system would allow both major ethnic groups to be represented in seats where each group have a significant population. While political parties may want to concentrate on maximising support from one particular group (as can be expected), there are incentives and benefits under this system for the parties to appeal to other groups, and form alliances with other parties, to maximise their chances of success.

### A Model of Political Party Engineering

Fiji has a sound history of a stable party system, with parties that represent clear social cleavages, including labor and ethnic interests. This however, has not prevented political upheaval at regular intervals since independence. In addition, in restoring democracy to Fiji, and in advance of any elections, there will be a need to develop political party structures and policy platforms.

In designing a party regulatory regime in what is essentially an ethnically divided, post-conflict society, it will be important to encourage candidates to represent clear, party-based, policy manifestos. This will avoid, or at least minimize, campaigns built around small ruling elites, or the political ambitions of charismatic leaders, which often use less-developed policies. In the latter scenario, voters are more heavily influenced by non-ideological factors, such as self-interest, the leader's popularity, and advertising, and less by policy.

The key question for Fiji is whether to allow parties to be ethnically based, as has traditionally occurred. Under such a system, also known as the **consociational** model, parties are expected to represent specific societal cleavages, typically related to factors such as ethnicity and religion. Under the consociational model, a party develops a clear demographic support base, and is expected to represent those specific interests. Typically, the party will receive strong support from its core support base, and low among other demographic groups. This makes it easier to campaign, and for the development of policies that appeal to the party's core support group.

Obviously under a consociational system ethnic divisions can be heightened during election campaigning, and minority groups can feel threatened by the policies and rhetoric espoused by majority interests. In this model however, it is the parliament that is viewed as the paramount democratic institu-

tion. It is in the parliament where the social cleavages are melded into a national purpose, through debate and the possible formation of alliances. Alliance building is more likely to occur where proportional voting systems are in place, as it is more likely that no single party will achieve a majority of seats.

To lessen the likelihood of divisive, ethnic-based political parties and election campaigns, an alternative model is to use a **centripetalist** model of party engineering. In such a model, parties are required or encouraged to overcome societal differences within parties' internal structures and practices. The flow-on effect, ideally, is political engagement and policy development that incorporates the interests of minority groups. Parties working in such systems typically need to build broad support bases in areas which may not normally be seen as 'friendly' territory. They need to develop policies which accommodate regional and sectional differences. However, every society and community necessarily comprises different interests, views, values, and ideas. Because of this diversity, it is generally impossible for a particular party or leader to represent an entire society, and so there can be genuine electoral competition between parties.

It can be argued that consociationalism is a 'natural' process of socially aggregating political interest, while centripetalism is an 'artificial' attempt at social and political engineering. For this reason, centripetalist models designed to counter ethnic divi-



sions can be prone to abuse. Parties wanting to stay true to their ethnic support base will attempt to meet the requirements of the party law, for example, by artificially inflating membership numbers in areas of low support.

Another method of artificially enforcing a degree of ethnic integration is through the electoral system, for example, by requiring parties to nominate a minimum specified percentage of candidates from ethnic groups. This is easiest done under a fully proportional system using party lists, for example, by requiring at least one in every three candidates to be from one of the two major ethnic groups. This has been commonly used in recent decades in many countries to ensure greater representation of women. For Fiji, it would allow parties to concentrate on one ethnic group, while having to include the other main ethnic group in their selection processes. However, to be effective in the Fiji situation, this would ideally require a single electorate for the entire country, and work against the idea of local representation.

## Conclusion

Despite all the problems of the recent past and the present, Fiji currently has an excellent opportunity to design an electoral system that is thoughtful of the country's unique ethnic and cultural mix, and which maximises the ability for parliament to be a true and accurate reflection of the wishes of the Fijian people. Irrespective of which electoral system

is chosen for the re-introduction of democracy in Fiji, it is crucially important to allow political parties ample opportunity to re-establish with their members, and with the general population, well in advance of the election. This will allow the parties to develop policy platforms that address the concerns and hopes of the Fijians. It will also allow parties to adopt thorough candidate selection processes.

While Fiji has previously experienced higher levels of women's representation than its Melanesian neighbours, this is a poor comparison, as 11 percent representation, as occurred at the 2006 election, remains well below the generally accepted level of 25-30 percent where a critical mass of women is achieved to bring about positive change. It would be an opportunity lost if some measures were not taken to ensure a higher proportion of women in parliament. Such measures would not only be beneficial to Fiji, but would provide leadership on this issue for the other Melanesian countries.

## Notes

1. For more information on these events, see for example, the writings of Brij Lal and Jon Fraenkel.
2. See the Constitution Commission of Fiji website, at <http://constitution.org.fj>
3. Rotuma is a small island group, about 650 kms to the north of the main Fiji islands. Its people are a distinct ethnic group, originating from Polynesia.

4. For detail, see the Fiji Constitution Review Commission, 1996, *The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future*, Parliamentary Paper 34 of 1996, Government Printer, Suva; and Lal and Larmour (eds), *Electoral Systems in Divided Societies: the Fiji Constitution Review*, National Centre for Development Studies, Canberra.
5. Some forms of preferential voting make the use of preferences optional, or limit the choices, such as Papua New Guinea's Limited Preferential Voting, where voters list only their 1st, 2nd, and 3rd preferences.
6. For a fuller explanation of the various electoral systems, and their benefits and drawbacks, see Reynolds and Reilly, 2002, *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design*, Stockholm, International IDEA.
7. The formula for calculating the number of votes required to achieve a quota is:  $votes\ needed\ to\ win = (total\ votes\ cast / seats + 1) + 1$ .
8. The parallel form of MMP is usually referred to as a semi-proportional system.
9. This table assesses the general merits of the various electoral systems, and is indicative only. A full assessment would require analysis of other actors, including magnitude, thresholds, and party regulation.

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Dr. Kelly completed his PhD on the topic of Australian electoral system reforms through the Political Science Program at the Australian National University. In 2012 he published his first book, *Directions in Australian Electoral Reform: Professionalism and Partisanship in Electoral Management* (ANU E Press), and has written several articles and book chapters on electoral laws.

Dr. Kelly was a Member of the Legislative Council of Western Australia, representing the East Metropolitan Region for the Australian Democrats from 1997 to 2001. After leaving Parliament, he served on the Democrats' National Executive from 2001 to 2003, including a term as National Deputy President, and was the party's Western Australian Campaign Director for the 2001 Federal election. He lives in Wellington, New Zealand.

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