



# National Gazette

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[2025

*Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Elections*

## APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICER AND ASSISTANT RETURNING OFFICER

### Central Bougainville By-Election

THE ELECTORAL COMMISSION, by virtue of the powers conferred by Section 18 (Delegation) and 20 (Assistant Returning Officers) of the Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Election (“Electoral Law”), hereby delegates specific powers, functions and administrative duties as listed below and appoints the persons listed in the Schedules to be the Assistant Returning Officers (ARO) for the Local-level Governments during the 2025 Local-level Government Election.

Their appointments are set from 08th May, 2025 to 27th July, 2025.

#### I. DELEGATION OF POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

Upon acceptance of their appointment, the Assistant Returning Officers shall ensure that the conduct of nomination, polling and scrutiny in their assigned Electorate are performed in accordance with the provisions of the Electoral Law and the Electoral Law (National Elections) Regulation 2007 (“Election Regulation”) and under the direction of the Electoral Commission and supervision of the Returning Officer (RO) of the Provincial or Open Electorates. The AROs are bound by and shall abide by the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission (PNGEC) Code of Conduct for electoral officials.

The AROs shall assist their assigned Ros in the resolution of election-related disputes that may arise during nomination, campaign, polling, and scrutiny in their area of responsibility and in accordance with the applicable electoral law and regulation.

**Appointment of Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer—*continued*****A. Nominations**

1. The ARO shall ensure the following tasks and functions are completed in a timely manner and/or performed according to the applicable Electoral Law and Regulation.
  - a. Assist the Returning Officer (RO) in duties related to the Candidates Nomination.
  - b. Before the nominations, set up convenient venue (free of charge) identify office space in the LLG Office. To avoid inconvenience intending candidates must be fully aware, where to nominate and how to nominate.
  - c. Ensure office safety and security.
  - d. Work within the Organic Law on National and Local-level Government Election and Regulations.
  - e. Effective and efficient safety of Nomination Forms and relevant documentations.
  - f. Review and verify nomination forms and documentations prior to submitting them to Provincial Electoral Office and PNGEC Headquarters.
  - g. Management of funds, ensure funds available are acquitted in line with the *Finance Management Act*.

**B. Polling**

2. The ARO shall ensure the following tasks and functions are completed in a timely manner and/or performed according to the applicable Electoral Law and Regulation:
  - h. Assist the RO in the preparation, publication, and implementation of a polling schedule for the assigned Electorate, showing the anticipated dates and times within the polling period in accordance with directions from the Electoral Commission.
  - i. Assist the RO in engaging and supervising Presiding Officers, Assistant Presiding Officers, Poll Clerks, Queue Controllers, Ballot Box Guards, and other polling officials.
  - j. Before the start of polling, arrange for the setting up and furnishing of necessary polling equipment and materials, including ballot papers, and the certified list of voters and Presiding Officer's Journal.
  - k. Make a daily report to the RO on the progress of polling and counting, and strive to immediately notify the RO of any incidents or disruptions to polling or counting.
  - l. At the end of polling, work closely with the Presiding Officers (PO) to ensure the integrity of ballot boxes, Presiding Officers Journals, certified lists of voters, ballot paper accounting, security seal tracking forms, and other election documents used in polling, and coordinate the transport of these documents and material to the designated location for the electorate count Centre's for the conduct of scrutiny.
  - m. At the designated location for the electorate count Centre's, receive and take custody of the Polling Team ballot boxes for the Provincial and Open Electorate and polling documents and material from the PO or Assistant Presiding Officer (APO).
  - n. Ensure that the PO and APO have fully and correctly completed the Presiding Officer Journals, including the Used Certified List of Voters and if there are any errors, omissions, or disputes, then the ARO must endeavor to have these remedied by the PO prior to the commencement of the Scrutiny.

**Appointment of Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer—*continued*****C. Scrutiny and Count**

The AROs shall:

- a. Preside over the conduct of scrutiny of the ballot at the District or Local-level Government (LLG) counting stations of the counting Centre as assigned by the RO.
- b. Determine the formality or informality of ballots during the scrutiny process, and inform the RO of the determination.
- c. With the assistance of the police or other security forces, enforce order and discipline in the counting stations and Centre's.
- d. Perform verification of the requisite scrutiny and count forms and candidate boxes, sign the count forms when validated, and deliver the same to the RO as directed.

**D. Special Functions**

- a. Set up establish, and operate a Provincial or Open Electorate counting Centre, consisting of different District or LLG counting stations, within the province or district. This function shall be instead of or in addition to the functions enumerated above.
- b. Exercise the functions and responsibilities of the RO, if the RO fails or is unable to perform his/her function. Under the written instruction of the Electoral Commissioner, the ARO shall exercise the functions of the RO until such order from the Electoral Commissioner is revoked.
- c. Conduct an inventory and complete a check-list receipt of all polling and counting electoral returns, Used Certified List of Voters, Presiding Officer's Journal, Gender Tally Sheets (male/female), Forms 66A/B (etc), and Polling Schedules.

**II. LIMITATIONS TO THE POWERS OF RETURNING OFFICERS**

The ARO shall not perform any other function not listed above unless specifically instructed by the RO and confirmed by the Electoral Commission.

The ARO shall not set aside any ballot boxes for dispute during the conduct of the scrutiny and count process within the designated Electorate counting Centre unless a candidate or scrutineer lodges a written objection with a statutory declaration of the facts for review by the Electoral Commission in line with the applicable laws and regulations and the Electoral Commission directs him or her to do so.

Furthermore, the ARO shall not enter into any financial contract or commitment for goods and/or services in the name of the PNGEC, without the express written permission of the Electoral Commission or his duly designated representative.

**Appointment of Returning Officer and Assistant Returning Officer—*continued***

**III. APPOINTMENT OF RETURNING OFFICERS**

SCHEDULE 1

The following schedule contains the appointment of Returning Officers for Provincial Electorates in line with Section 20 (Assistant Returning Officer) of the Electoral Law.

Column 1 Returning Officers	Column 2 Electorate
<u>Autonomous Region of Bougainville</u>	
Justine Pantumari	Central Bougainville Open

**IV. APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT RETURNING OFFICERS**

SCHEDULE 2

The following schedule contains the appointment of Assistant Returning Officers for Provincial Electorates in line with Section 20 (Assistant Returning Officer) of the Electoral Law.

Column 1 Assistant Returning Officers	Column 2 LLG
<u>Autonomous Region of Bougainville</u>	
Gideon Taruna Hilda Janget Kevin Reginal Masen	Kieta Rural Wakunai Rural Panguna Rural

Dated this 6th day of May, 2025.

S. SINAI, ML,  
Electoral Commissioner.