

**Response to questions from the Senate Estimates
Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade Legislation Committee
Mr Daniel Sloper, FAS PAD**

Australia's support for elections in PNG

Senator the Hon Kimberley Kitching: How many DFAT staff will participate in election observation?

- Up to 70 Australian High Commission staff, both Australian and locally engaged, will participate in election observation
 - this includes four Australian parliamentarians.

Senator Kitching: How many DFAT staff will travel to PNG to participate in election observation? What will their role be?

- We plan for two DFAT staff members to participate in the Australian High Commission's observation of PNG's 2017 national election.
- One officer has already been deployed for approximately two months to assist the High Commission with logistical support for what is a complex undertaking, and is also likely to participate in election observation.
- A second officer will be deployed for a shorter period to act as a member of the mission's election observation team, observing the conduct of polling and other election processes and contributing their observations to the Australian High Commission.

Senator Kitching and Senator the Hon Claire Moore asked for information on current and past funding for elections.

The Australian Government has provided assistance for PNG's elections in response to specific requests from the Government of PNG. Accordingly, the nature of the assistance and consequent funding level has varied at each election.

2017 election

Australia's package of support in 2016-17 is still ongoing, and final costs will not be known until after the election period has concluded. Our support for this election is delivery-focussed, and fills gaps identified by the PNGEC.

Currently, we are forecasting around \$8 million from the aid program, plus Australian Defence Force costs that will be known after their support operations conclude. The activities include:

- the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) (approx. \$2.5 million)

- AEC advisers are assisting the PNGEC to train temporary election workers, improve systems to respond to election incidents; and support operations
- the Australian Civilian Corps (ACC) (up to \$1.2 million)
 - ACC officers are supporting logistics planning (including flight scheduling), training of electoral workers and managing the PNGEC warehouse
- the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (\$4 million)
 - advisers are assisting with election operations, the voter roll update, voter awareness and strengthening ICT systems.
- the PNG Governance Facility, providing the remainder of the support including
 - a financial management adviser to support election budgeting
 - an ICT systems expert to enhance results transmission
 - short-term communication advisers
 - 5,000 closed user group mobile phones to improve coordination between polling/counting teams and headquarters.

Australia is also assisting the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) to train senior operational officers in election security, professionalism and human rights.

2012 election

In 2012, Australia provided:

- \$15.8 million from the aid program for specialist advisers, public awareness activities, information technology and training
- \$2.5 million in support of AFP to upgrade communications, conduct election-related security training and advisory support
- \$32.3 million in support of Defence-led activities focused on logistics including aircraft to move election materials such as ballot papers and electoral staff.

2007 election

In 2007, Australia provided \$6.8 million from the aid program through the Electoral Support Program, a long-term capacity-building program with the PNG Electoral Commission.

2002 election

In 2002, Australia provided \$5.4 million from the aid program through the Electoral Support Program, a long-term capacity-building program with the PNG Electoral Commission.