

Commonwealth observers impressed with Nauru's elections

26 October 2016

Commonwealth independent observers have described the 2016 general election in Nauru as 'inclusive, transparent and competitive'. The election was held on the 9 July and [the report has been published today](#).

The process was organised by the newly formed Nauru Electoral Commission. The independent observers said the Commission 'did a remarkable job' considering the short time-frame to organise the poll.

The observation team, led by the former president of Kiribati, Anote Tong, was disappointed by the lack of women taking part in the election. Three women took part and the observers encouraged all sides to create an environment to ensure greater representation in parliament.

The Commonwealth Observer Mission has urged the Commission to look into concerns about proxy votes, which was identified as a concern in previous elections. The observers heard concerns about a lack of openness and accountability regarding campaign financing and called on the Electoral Commission to develop a regulatory framework in this area.

Among the Mission's recommendations were:

- that the Electoral Commission should continue to update the electoral roll
 - that the government should review the mandatory three-month resignation period for public servants seeking to run for elections
 - that the Commission considers posting the list of names of voters wishing to transfer to another constituency before they are included on the electoral roll for that area
 - that the government should lift the ban on Facebook once it had finalised its laws and guidelines on the responsible use of social media
-
- The Mission also suggested that the Commission should contemplate the role of the media in further embedding the country's democracy. It felt that training on election reporting would ensure public confidence in the media in future elections.

"The Commonwealth's independent observers were impressed with the quality of Nauru's elections. The people of Nauru have chosen their leaders democratically and have pointed to the future direction of the society in which they want to live, just as the Commonwealth Charter expects," said the Director of Commonwealth Secretariat's Political Division, Simon Gimson.

"The Secretariat looks forward to continue working with the government, Parliament, the Electoral Commission and all those involved in strengthening the institutions and culture of democracy further in Nauru."

Will Henley

Communications Officer
Communications Division