5. The case for using electronic technology in Fiji's general elections

ABSTRACT

On 5 December 2006, the Commander of the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, Commodore Vorege Bainimarama, announced he had assumed executive power: he dismissed the elected government and declared a State of Emergency. One month later, on 4 January 2007, Bainimarama was appointed interim prime minister by the President of the Fiji Islands and set out the broad objectives of his interim government, which included a commitment to electoral reform. On 20 February 2007, the interim Cabinet approved a 'road map', which committed Fiji to a general election and full restoration of parliamentary democracy by 2010. The announcement included the provision for a population census to be carried out by the Bureau of Statistics in 2007 and the consequent determination by the Boundaries Commission of new geographical constituencies. In addition, the Elections Office will be expected to examine a new system of 'polling, voting, vote counting and declaration of results'. This article argues that, as planning for the road map progresses, the Fiji Elections Office should give serious consideration to the expanded use of the 'new' technologies—the internet, the worldwide web and mobile telephones—when considering changes to the voting system. Attempts were made, primarily by the Elections Office and some political parties, to use the new technologies to inform citizens about their voting options during the 2006 election campaign but the available technology was not used to its fullest. Electronic technology is widely available throughout Fiji and creative ways need to be developed by all political actors to reach citizens, especially young people.

RAE NICHOLL

University of the South Pacific

IJI'S population of about 900,000 citizens has a literacy rate of 94 percent and enjoys the most diverse media in the South Pacific. While the print media are widely read, difficulties with distribution to remote rural areas often result in papers arriving a week late with the news already stale and superseded by fresh scandals, gossip and political events. Consequently, radio is the most immediate medium serving the widespread isolated islands of the archipelago. Fiji has two broadcasting companies; one owned by a publicly listed company, Communications Fiji Ltd, and the other being the government owned Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd. Between the two organisations, the country has eleven radio stations broadcasting in the three official languages of English, Fijian and Hindi, the local version of Hindustani.

Fiji is well-served also by the print media. Besides many special interest magazines, the country has three daily papers that appear seven days of the week. *The Fiji Times*, first published in 1869, proudly claims to be the oldest newspaper in the South Pacific. News Ltd of Australia, a subsidiary of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, wholly owns *The Fiji Times*. It is the biggest newspaper in Fiji interms of circulaton and staff numbers and also publishes a Hindi weekly, *Shanti Dut*, and a Fijian weekly, *Nailalakai*.

Owned by local business interests and calling itself Fiji's only independent newspaper, *The Fiji Sun* is the main competitor of *The Fiji Times*. The country's third daily newspaper, *The Fiji Daily Post*, was at one time 46.4 percent owned by the Fiji government. Today, the small, struggling tabloid claims to be 'the independent newspaper reporting accurate and unbiased news'.

The mainstream media make good use of new technologies. All three daily papers—*The Fiji Times, The Fiji Sun* and *The Daily Post*—have websites. *The Fiji Times Online* is the most comprehensive and includes coverage of local and international daily news and weather forecasts. The site has a chat room called 'Your Say' inviting users to write about—and respond to other writers' views—on issues of the day. In addition, two other privately owned companies run highly successful websites designed for Fiji Islanders living overseas. Fiji Village is owned by Communications Fiji, already mentioned as owning five radio stations. The Fiji Village site is up-to-date, contains local news and a great deal of information for tourists coming to the country, but has no chat room. During the 2006 election campaign, Fijilive offered a comprehensive news service, conducted online political polling and had a chat room.

Television tends to be confined to the more urban areas. Fiji Television,

which is 14 percent government-owned, broadcasts Fiji One, a free-to-air commercial channel, and Sky Television, which offers three pay channels showing sport; movies and reruns of situation comedies; and Hindi movies. Fiji One is by far the liveliest and most informative channel, offering a full hour of local and international news each weekday evening as well as weekly current affairs programmes, some local programmes and public service broadcasts. Prior to the 2006 coup, Parliament was shown live on Fiji One, as were other major official events such as the funeral of Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara in April 2004.² There is one other free-to-air television station. Trinity Fiji, a conservative Christian broadcaster, provides a 24-hour radio station and television channel relaying religious programmes, which come mainly from the United States.³ The choice of channel might improve in the future as, on 13 March 2007, the interim government extended 'a general invitation to interested parties wishing to operate free-to-air television broadcast services to submit their expressions of interest'.⁴

Availability of new technology in Fiji

In 2003, the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) ranked Fiji in 85th position, out of a total of 178 countries, in terms of a country's ability to access new technologies, placing it in the middle of the medium access group (ITU, 2003). The telecommunications industry in Fiji is a government-owned monopoly. Formed in 1976, Fiji International Telecommunications Ltd (FINTEL) is a private company jointly owned by the Fiji government (51 percent) and Cable and Wireless PLC of the United Kingdom (49 percent). FINTEL operates an optical fibre submarine cable terminal (the Southern Cross Cable) and a satellite earth station. The company claims that a 'combination of these two alternative, though complementary, facilities provides Fiji with both adequate capacity and reliability through a diversity of routes' (FINTEL, 2005). Through the Southern Cross Cable, Fiji now has access to broadband data services and it is anticipated that this will lead to rapid economic progress in the development of such industries as call centres and data processing services.

Internet services

Telecom Fiji Ltd is the sole provider of local and national telephone services consisting of 55 telephone exchanges throughout Fiji and Rotuma,

connecting more than 101,000 customers. In 2002, Telecom Fiji relinquished its operation of internet services operations to Internet Services Fiji, operating as Connect, although Connect remains 100 percent owned by Telecom. At present, no official statistics have been compiled on the number of personal computers in the country or on the level of internet usage. As noted in the ITU report, internet usage is affordable as Fiji citizens have the advantage of a flat rate local call pricing for dial-up access (ITU, 2003). Connect offers budgeting assistance to its internet customers through a prepay service that makes the cost manageable as there are no monthly bills or charges. Prepay internet is popular with users.

Mobile phone services

Vodafone Fiji Ltd provides mobile phone services. Vodafone is 51 percent owned by Telecom Fiji Ltd. When Vodafone opened its network in Fiji in 1994, it had just over 500 customers. By 2005, subscribers to Vodafone mobile services had reached 165,000, raising mobile ownership to about 20 percent of the population. Vodafone has been expanding coverage throughout Fiji, including into the rural and outlying areas and now has 79 base stations providing mobile coverage for over 55 percent of the population. Vodafone expects the number of base stations to grow, and reports that its expansion is 'aimed at reinforcing coverage to support rural development, the tourism sector, eliminate congestion and upgrade to introduce a whole host of new services' (Vodafone, 2006). Mobile ownership, by 2009, is expected to surpass that of fixed lines and be at about 50 percent of the world's population (*Cellular News*, 21 March 2006). Fiji appears to be on track to follow this international trend.

According to the ITU report, Fiji's mobile peak time call charges are among the highest in the world (ITU, 2003). To assist customers with this burden, and in the same way that Connect has a prepay service for internet connection, Vodafone offers a prepay facility. The high charges are partly offset by the popularity of text messaging, which is a much cheaper option to making a mobile call. Texting friends is a popular pastime among young educated people in Fiji, who also use their mobile phones to send text messages to radio stations and Fiji One Television to make music requests, send messages over the air, enter competitions, and take part in on-air polling, which usually involves voting on entertainment trivia.

E-government in Fiji

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2003, p. 23) has defined e-government as 'the use of information and communication technologies, and particularly the internet, as a tool to achieve better government'. A paper was developed by the government in 2004 entitled 'Policy directions and strategies for the development and growth of information and communication technology'. Fiji is working towards the goals contained in this document.

The Fiji Parliament website was launched in 2003 and is a project of the British High Commission in Suva. Prior to the 2006 coup d'état, it included biographical information about Members of Parliament and contact details for MPs and staff; copies of bills and acts; information about legislative and select committees; and information about publications, research and the Parliamentary Library. *Hansard*, the verbatim record of parliamentary proceedings and debates, appeared on the website and had been updated to the day of the coup, when Parliament was suspended. The last reports appeared on 30 November 2006 for the House of Representatives and 5 December 2006 for the Senate.⁶

Although the Parliamentary website was an invaluable tool for democracy, it remained incomplete. For example, the Diary section was usually empty, apart from a calendar, and did not contain useful information such as details of the sitting days and hours for Parliament or information about where or when the committees were sitting or if they were open to the public.

The Official Fiji Government website, which is separate from the Parliamentary website, was set up in 1998 and has expanded steadily. Emi Rabukawaqa, former chief executive officer of the Ministry of Information, Communications and Media Relations noted:

The ongoing enhancement and enlargement of the Official Fiji Government Website is of great importance as it provides new access to government in wide-ranging ways. It is critical in transforming the way government works in making information available ... At a 'whole-ofgovernment' level we now have a National ICT (information and communication technology) Policy which provides the necessary growth of the information economy based on the three platforms of e-government, e-commerce and e-community and we are currently pursuing electronic government or e-government. This will revolutionise the way we work

as public servants. Fundamentally, the central theme of e-government is ensuring excellence in serving our citizens, who will then be able to access government 24 hours and engage with public officials easily and on many fronts. (*The Fiji Times*, 21 October 2005, p. 37)

On the Fiji government website, citizens can access ministries and government departments, which carry ministerial speeches, press releases and news briefs as well as government web links and government directories.

The Fiji Elections Office, which runs the voter education programme as well as the elections, has a link to the official government website. According to Walter Rigamoto, a former Elections Supervisor, the website was set up in time for the 2001 election campaign: the rationale behind its construction was the need to provide enhanced voter education. Voter education prior to the 1999 election had been less than successful as evidenced by a significant percentage of the voting public failing to understand important aspects of the newly introduced alternative vote electoral system (2002, p. 4). As will be discussed later, there was considerable disquiet about the difficulties experienced by citizens when registering on the electoral roll and the large number of invalid ballots cast at the election.

After the 2001 election, public servants who had been seconded to the Elections Office for the election period returned to their departments. Consequently, following the announcement of the 2001 election results, the Elections Office website became dormant. In anticipation of new elections which, according to the Fiji Constitution had to be scheduled by September 2006 at the latest, reactivation of the website occurred in late 2005. In fact, the Prime Minister announced on 1 March 2006 that the elections would be held from 6 to 13 May, 2006.

During the 2006 campaign, the site included educational information on the electoral system, voting information and facts about political parties. The website had no interactive facility and no invitation was extended to citizens to ask questions of election officials or to receive feedback from them. Even if the Elections Office did not have sufficient resources to deal with individual's questions, voters could have found a section on frequently asked questions (FAQs) helpful. Following the election, detailed results and official announcements were posted on the site. Finally, activity ceased on 19 May 2006 following the last entry, which appeared under the heading 'Hon. Laisenia Qarase sworn in as Prime Minister'.⁷

E-democracy in Fiji

Technological advances have resulted in the development of a new form of direct democracy whereby politicians can communicate with citizens without their messages being filtered by the media (Street, 2001, p. 159). The first politician to use e-democracy strategically is considered to be the American professional wrestler, Jesse Ventura, who was elected Governor of Minnesota in November 1998. Ventura's electoral success was attributed to his ability to set up direct communication between himself, as the candidate, and the voters in his state (Baker 2004, p. 106). Avoiding the media has a resonance in Fiji as politicians from all parties frequently accuse the media of bias. As Rigamoto noted, 'in a small country such as ours, it is very easy for a media outlet to be perceived as being biased or being manipulated by political entities' (2005, p. 5).

Politicians in many countries now use the internet to communicate directly with their constituents. In developed countries, where access to the internet is much higher than the developing countries, politicians often maintain their own websites. In the United States, Members of Congress create highly sophisticated websites that may include: a welcome message, on which users can click to view a video of the politician welcoming them onto their site; an online polling facility, which enables the politician to ascertain the views of constituents on such subjects as social security reform; speeches and news about the politician; and a photographic gallery featuring the politician in every frame. For example, see the website of United States Congresswoman Barbara Lee.⁸ In Fiji, only one candidate in the 2006 election campaign set up a personal site. Successful first time candidate for the Fiji Labour Party (FLP), Monica Raghwan's site contained her curriculum vitae, her vision for the 2006 general elections, news, a map of her constituency, and a facility offering her constituents feedback about their problems and concerns.⁹

In addition, many political parties maintain informative websites that can serve as a public platform for the party. The information on these websites may be a combination of colourful images; video clips to view; policy information; messages from party leaders; information about conferences and meetings; and an online shopping facility, which encourages members to purchase party memorabilia. (For example, see the website of the United Kingdom Labour Party.)¹⁰ As a developing country, Fiji political parties have not yet developed comprehensive websites to compare with Western models. Even so, during

the 2006 election campaign, the Soqosoqo Duavata Ni Lewenivanua (SDL), the FLP and the National Alliance Party of Fiji either reactivated old sites or set up new ones. Most of these sites became inactive shortly after the election although the Fiji Labour Party continued to post material until January 2007, one month after the 2006 coup.

Preparing for the 2006 elections

Voter registration

Fiji's 1997 Constitution compelled all eligible citizens to register on one of the electoral rolls and consequently to vote. The House of Representatives consisted of 71 members representing single-member constituencies while the Senate consisted of 32 members, all of whom were political appointees (*Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*. 1998, pp. 39, 41-42). Of the 71 members in the House of Representatives, 46 were elected by voters who were registered on one of four separate communal rolls depending on whether they were Fijians, Indians, Rotumans or 'others'. Voters registered as 'others' were citizens of Fiji who belonged to ethnic groups other than Fijian, Indian or Rotuman: they could be European, Chinese or people originally from other Pacific Islands. A second 'open' electoral roll was also constructed, allowing voters from all communal groups to elect the remaining 25 members (*Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands*. 1998, p. 36).

The construction of the electoral rolls proved to be a difficult exercise in 1999 and 2001 and many citizens were concerned that these problems would be repeated when the rolls for the 2006 election were being drawn up. As 2005 drew towards an end, political parties demanded to know why the Elections Supervisor was absent from the country on study leave in Australia and why the Elections Office was taking so long to re-activate its website. In October 2005, the Fiji Human Rights Commission took the initiative and began showing a series of advertisements on Fiji One Television, explaining the importance of registering on the electoral roll and the penalties for not doing so, as well as explaining the reasons why all citizens should be involved in the democratic process.

Once started, the registration process did not proceed without criticism from political parties. A house-to-house voter registration exercise began on 12 September and ended on 23 September 2005 (Fiji Elections Office, 4 August 2005). The spokesperson for the ruling SDL party, Jale Baba, and

the president of the Conservative Alliance Matanitu Vanua party, Ratu Tanoa Cakobau, both commented on the difficulty rural people, in particular, were experiencing in registering to vote (Raicola, 2005). Political parties were also concerned about the quality and expertise of the enumerators, who were employed by the Elections Office to sign up citizens. This concern culminated in Jale Baba accusing the enumerators of 'sitting under trees and fabricating voters', pointing out that they were paid for the number of voters they enrolled (*Fiji One News*, 11 November 2005). The issue of voter registration and the poor state of the electoral rolls remained contentious up to and after the election.

One positive use of e-technology by the Elections Office was that voters in both the 2001 and 2006 elections were able to check the accuracy of their registration details online. This facility could be expanded. For instance, in Washington DC, a software company called Votenet Solutions Inc has developed an online service to assist eligible citizens to register on the electoral roll. This innovative web approach also sends voters emails to remind them of registration deadlines and provides driving directions to assist voters to find their way to their designated polling places (Baker, 2004, p. 106).

High percentage of informal votes

Overlaying the complexity of the various rolls, Fiji's 1997 Constitution also introduced a preferential system of voting known as the alternative vote to replace the first-past-the-post or simple plurality voting system. The alternative vote system gave the voters two voting options. If voting 'below the line', voters were required to list their preferences from a list of candidates and political parties sequentially on their ballot paper. Alternatively, voters could tick 'above the line'. On this half of the ballot paper, political parties were entitled to list their preferences sequentially. As part of the democratic process, parties were expected to advertise their preferences through the media well before the election so that voters could make informed decisions about whether or not they would accept their party's list of preferences. If they decided to abide by their party's choices, they ticked their ballot paper 'above the line'. If they did not agree with their party's pre-selected preferences, they had to vote 'below the line', being very careful to accurately number their preferences as votes would be declared invalid if voters made a mistake in the numbering. To complicate matters further, voters received two

voting papers—one vote for their communal seat constituency and one vote for their open seat constituency, which were usually filled out in identical fashion, that is, either above or below the line (Elections Office, 2006).

A high number of informal votes (spoiled or invalid ballots) were cast in the three elections following the introduction of the alternative vote. The percentage was 8.7 in 1999, rising to 11.89 percent in 2001, before dropping again to 8.9 percent in 2006. The imperative to reduce the number of spoiled ballots led a SDL spokesperson to suggest that citizens needed to be better educated on how to vote. He suggested that 'the Elections Office needs to discuss with political parties whether the voting paper needs to be simplified because as it is, it is quite complicated' (Raicola, 2005).

Voter turnout

In preparing for the 2006 election, Elections Office officials were concerned to increase the rate of voter turnout, which had fallen significantly from a high of 90.18 percent in 1999 to 78.93 percent in 2001. Rigamoto commented that one of the reasons for low voting rates in 2001 was the difficulty some voters experienced in attending their designated polling places—if they went to a different polling place, they may have been denied a vote. He noted that some voters were deterred by long, slow queues and went home without voting. Some citizens were apathetic about voting; and others may have decided, as there had been no prosecutions of those who failed to vote in 1999, that the threat of a \$50 fine for not voting was worth the risk (2002, p. 8). In 2006, a government initiative to take the voting process into rural villages around the country resulted in voter turnout rising to 87.7 percent.

Use of mobile phones to improve democracy

Fiji could build on the high level of mobile phone access and usage already evident throughout most of the country to improve the level of voter registration and voter turnout. Mobile phones were used in the 2006 election during the election period, for example, radio stations invited listeners to text them for voting information. One example broadcasted regularly by Fiji Gold FM stated: 'No matter where you live, you can text the radio station for information on which polling stations will be open, as well as the time of opening' (7 May 2006). The most controversial text message arrived in the mail boxes of tens of thousands of people at 12.23 pm on 5 May 2006, the day before voting started. The anonymous message read:

Want cheaper MOBILE rates? VOTE LABOUR. Remove telecom monopoly. Rates low as 5c p/minute. Be a shareholder in Phone Co's from AUSTRALIA. Reply with NAME & ADDRESS [sic].

Considered ideal for developing countries, mobile phones are a cheap and effective tool. They enjoy huge advantages over other forms of communication technologies because they do not rely on a permanent electricity supply and avoid the construction of costly infrastructure. As increasingly cheaper handsets are developed, the demand for mobile phones is expected to grow. The World Bank has observed that 77 percent of the world's population already lives within range of a mobile network (*The Economist*, 12 March 2005, p. 11).

Fiji has been rapidly expanding mobile coverage, which makes it an ideal country in which to initiate the use of mobile phones in the election process. Graham Leung, a former chairperson of the Electoral Commission, advocated the increased use of new technology as a way to assist the voters of Fiji to fulfil their civic duty (Fiji Media and Elections Workshop, 15 October 2005). As noted previously, voters in 2001 and 2006 were able to check the internet to ensure they were on the electoral roll: mobile phones could be used for the same purpose.

When e-voting is being considered as an option for Fiji, the familiarity that many young people already have with voting by mobile phone should be taken into account. For instance, they send text messages to radio stations and Fiji One Television to vote for their favourite songs or singers: they could vote for a political candidate in much the same way. In addition to voting at their own convenience, voting by mobile phone would obviate the need to travel to the correct polling place and the annoyance of waiting for hours in a long queue to cast their ballot.

Experiments with e-voting, in the form of text messaging, began in the United Kingdom for local body elections in 2002. Initiated by the Minister for Local Government, the aim was part of a project to gauge how successful mobile phone voting would be in attracting a larger voter turnout. In particular, the initiative was aimed at younger voters (the age of enfranchisement is 18 years in the United Kingdom, 21 years in Fiji), who frequently fail to register or vote (*BBC News*, 5 February 2002). Concurrently, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister initiated a detailed research project entitled *Implementing*

MEDIA AND DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

electronic voting in the UK, which laid out the advantages and difficulties related to electronic voting, including the use of mobile phones. The report noted:

The apparent universality of the telephone (both fixed and mobile) suggests that it might be an appropriate technology for implementing e-voting. Their common use in private polls, such as interactive TV programmes, also suggests that they have popular appeal. (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, n.d.)

Significant problems may hamper the introduction of e-voting over the phone. The report pointed to problems with security; the lack of secrecy; the authentication of voters; and the familiarity of voters with the telephone system (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, n.d.). These are technical problems which, with ingenuity, will be solved. For example, technology already exists to allow secure online and telephonic transactions, which could be used to maintain security during e-voting. To avoid the possibility of fraud, internet and telephone banking systems already require customers to use two separate passwords and to enter a secure area before carrying out a transaction. In the case of mobile voting, another possibility is enhancing the existing technology used in the purchase of prepay telephone cards. Voters could be issued with a single-use card containing a unique number: they would be able to use the card once only, which would preclude any tendency towards voter fraud by voting twice.

The United Kingdom report also considered that the secrecy of the vote was always difficult to maintain when voting took place at home, concluding that no place was more secret than a public polling place. If a family member wished to keep their vote secret, using fixed line phones posed a problem in busy households where there was little private space, but voting over a mobile phone can be done anywhere and at any time. Of more concern was the privacy of the vote. The report found that, when asked, people were concerned that electronic voting would make it easier to discover the way in which individuals had voted. After consideration, the report concluded that maintaining secrecy would not pose an insurmountable problem because new technologies would be developed to deal with the issue (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, n.d.).

Conclusion

The introduction of the alternative vote electoral system to the Fiji Islands in the 1997 Constitution, coupled with a complex set of racially-based electoral rolls, may be partly to blame for the lower than desirable voter turnout and the significant number of spoiled voting papers experienced in the elections of 1999, 2001 and 2006. Once the interim regime has implemented its road map, it is probable that a new electoral system will be installed that will remove the alternative vote system and the 1997 Constitution's racially-constructed electoral rolls. Democracy could be further served through the enhanced use of new technologies, particularly mobile phones. Most problems relating to the use of mobile phones for e-voting will be solved through the modification of existing software such as that used in internet and telephone banking. Even if e-voting is not feasible in the near future, the use of mobile phones to register voters and deliver voter education directly to the citizens of the Fiji Islands is possible now.

Notes

- 1. www.rfmf.mil.fj/html.roamap statement.html
- 2. In June 2006, the Fiji government announced the sale of 14 percent or 1,442,000 shares held by government in Fiji Television Ltd. Fiji TV's current shareholders, apart from Government's 14 percent, are Yasana Holdings Ltd, with 51 percent; Punja and Sons, 12.11 percent; Fijian Holdings, 5.31 percent; Unit Trust of Fiji, 4.65 percent; C J Patel, 2.43 percent; Kontiki Funds, 1.98 percent; Dominion Insurance, 1.21 percent; and others 7.31 percent. Yasana Holdings is a holding company for the 14 provinces in Fiji and the Rotuma Island Council. Hon. Isireli Leweniqila, Minister for Information and Communications, Speech to Parliament, 21 June 2006. www.fiji.gov.fj/publish/printer 6942.shtml Retrieved on 7 November 2006).
- 3. Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase launched Trinity Fiji in February 2002. The 24-hour channel is completely funded by the United States based Trinity Broadcasting Network, the world's largest network of Christian television stations. www.sidsnet.org/pacific/usp.journ/nius/docs/jan02/3494.html Retrieved on 27 October 2006.
- 4. www.fiji.gov.fj/uploads/eoiadvertisement.pdf
- 5. www.fiji.gov.fj/uploads/ictdevelopmentpolicy.pdf Retrieved on 27 March 2007.
- 6. www.parliament.gov.fj/hansard/viewhansard.aspx
- 7. www.elections.gov.fj
- 8 . lee.house.gov
- 9. monicaraghwan.com/index.htm
- 10. Labour.org.uk

References

Baba, J. (2005, November 11). Spokesperson for the SDL Party. Fiji One News.

Baker, S. (2004, March 29). Click the Vote. Business Week, pp. 102-106.

BBC News. (2002, 5 February). Text message voting to be trialled. www.news.bbc Retrieved 27 October 2005 from www.news.bbc/co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1802956. stm

Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands. (1998), Suva, Fiji.

Griffen, A. (Ed.) (2002). A citizens review of the Fiji Islands general elections 2001, Suva, Fiji: Citizens Constitutional Forum.

Leung, G. (2005). Chairperson, Fiji Electoral Commission. Comments made to the 2006 Fiji Media and Elections Workshop on October 15, Suva.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. (n.d.). *Implementing electronic voting in the UK*. Retrieved on 27 October 2005 from www.odpm.gov.uk

Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD). (2003), *The e-government imperative*, Paris: OECD.

Rabukawaqa, E. (2005, October 21). A new look civil service. *The Fiji Times*, p. 37.

Raicola, V. (2005, October 7). Make the right choice. The Fiji Times, p. 7.

Rigamoto, W. (2002). The 2001 general elections—assessment and reflections. In Arlene Griffen (Ed.), *A citizens' review of the Fiji Islands general elections 2001*. Suva: Citizens Constitutional Forum.

Rigamoto, W. (2005). Administering elections and the media: a personal view based on the 2001 elections. Paper presented to 2006 Fiji Media and Elections Workshop, Suva, October 15.

Riley, T. B. (2000, December). *Electronic governance and electronic democracy: living and working in the wired world.* Rogers W'O Okot-Uma (Ed.), London: The Commonwealth Secretariat.

Royal Fiji Military Forces (2007, 20 February), Media Statement by Prime Minister Commodore Voreqe Bainimarama, 'Road Map' for the return to parliamentary democracy'. Retrieved on 19 March 2007 from: www.rfmf.mil.fj/html/roamap_statement.html

Street, J. (2001) *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy,* Basingstoke: Palgrave. *The Economist.* (2005, March 12). The real digital divide, p. 11.

Online resources

Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd. www.radiofiji.com.fj

Fiji Elections Office www.elections.gov.fj and http://rollsearch.elections.gov.fj/rollsearch.aspx

Fiji Government www.fiji.gov.fj

Fiji International Telecommunications Limited. www.fintelfiji.com

Fiji Labour Party www.flp.org.fj

Fijilive www.fijilive.com

Fiji Parliament. www.parliament.gov.fj and www.parliament.gov.fj/hansard/viewhansard.aspx

MEDIA AND DIGITAL DEMOCRACY

Fiji Village fijivillage.com
Fiji Television Ltd www.fijitv.com.fj
International Telecommunication Union. www.itu.iknt/ITU-D/ict/ce/fiji/
Monica Raghwan http://monicaraghwan.com/index.htm
National Alliance Party of Fiji www.alliancefiji.com
Radio New Zealand International www.rnzi.com
Republic of Fiji Military Forces rfmf.mil.fj
Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL) Party www.sdlparty.com.fj
Telecom Fiji Limited, www.telecomfiji.com.fj
The Fiji Daily Post www.fijidailypost.com
The Fiji Sun www.sun.com.fj
The Fiji Times www.fijitimes.fj
Vodafone Fiji www.vodafone.com.fj

Dr Rae Nicholl teaches political leadership, media politics and women's politics in the School of Social Sciences at the University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji Islands. Before joining USP, she lectured at Victoria University of Wellington. She spent a period as Fulbright scholar-in-residence at American University in Washington DC and simultaneously worked as a Legislative Fellow in the United States Congress. She wrote her PhD thesis on women and candidate selection in New Zealand, Guam and South Africa. nicholl_r@usp.ac.fj