

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Dates of **Elections**: 5 to 26 June 1982

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament on the normal expiry of the members' term of office.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Papua New Guinea, the House of Assembly, comprises 109 members elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

Every citizen of Papua New Guinea who is at least 18 years of age and has resided within his "electorate" (constituency) for more than six months is entitled to vote; disqualified are persons owing allegiance to a foreign State and the insane.

Electoral rolls are prepared on the direction of the Electoral Commission. Voting is not compulsory.

Qualified electors not less than 25 years of age who have either been born or resided (for the immediately preceding two years or for a period of five years at any time) in the electorate which they seek to represent are qualified to be members of the House of Assembly. Disqualified are persons under sentence of death or imprisonment for a period exceeding nine months, those convicted in the preceding three years of an electoral offence and those dismissed from office under the Leadership Code in the preceding three years. The parliamentary mandate is incompatible with the post of Governor-General.

Candidates for the House of Assembly may stand as independents or members of a recognized political party or group. Each must deposit a sum of 100 *kina*, which is reimbursed should the candidate poll at least one-third of the votes obtained by the winning candidate of the electorate concerned.

Assembly members are chosen by simple majority vote from 20 single-member provincial electorates and 89 single-member local, or "open", electorates. Each voter casts two votes, one for a provincial candidate and one for a local candidate.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary vacancies which occur between general elections. No by-elections are held within the last six months of a legislature.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

On 17 March 1982, election writs for the 109 House of Assembly seats were issued. Polling took place from 5 to 26 June and the writs were returned on 15 July; that same month, the election results were announced after several weeks of vote counting.

The election was supervised by 637 polling teams operating from 5,395 polling stations. A total of 1125 candidates were in the running; 59% of these were endorsed by or affiliated in some way with a political party, the others standing as independents. Major parties included the *Pangu Pari* (headed by Mr. Michael Somare, Prime Minister until March 1980), the People's Progress Party (led by Sir Julius Chan, Mr. Somare's successor), the National Party, the United Party and the Melanesian Alliance.

Voting results indicated a swing by the electorate towards party-backed candidates, as well as a marked preference for *Pangu Pati*, which gained 12 additional seats to arrive at a total of 51. In this context, Mr. Somare formed a new coalition (predominantly *Pangu* with some support from the United Party) Government after he was elected Prime Minister on 2 August. A 26-member Cabinet was then sworn in.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the House of Assembly

Number of registered electors.	2,500,000 (approx.)
Voters.	2,412,810
Blank or void ballot papers.	43,694
Valid votes.	2,369,116

Political Group	% of Candidates endorsed	% of Votes obtained	Number of Seats	Number of Seats held prior to Dissolution
<i>Pangu Pati</i>	17	34	51	31
People's Progress Party.	9	10	14	17
National Party	13	10	13	15
United Party.	7	7.2	9	14
Melanesian Alliance	6.4	8.6	8	6
Diro's Group	4	6.9	7	—
<i>Papua Besena</i>	1.2	1.6	3	8
Papua Action Party	1.2	0.8	—	—
Independents.	41.2	20.9	4	18
			109	109

2. *Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Professional Category*

Businessmen	14
Teachers	12
Public servants	9
Farmers	8
Councillors	6
Departmental heads	6
Mission workers	4
Provincial government employees	4
Policemen	4
Aid post orderlies	4
Provincial politicians	3
Ministerial staff	3
Broadcasters	3
Others	<u>29</u>
	109

3. *Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Sex*

Men	108
Women	1
	109

4. *Distribution of Members of Parliament
according to Age Group*

25-30 years	17
31-35	33
36-40	26
41-45	20
46-50	9
51 and over	<u>4</u>
	109