

## PAPUA NEW GUINEA

**Dates of Elections:** 13 June to 4 July 1987

### **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 National Parliament of Papua New Guinea 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 Parliament. 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 Parliament 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. 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.

## Background and Outcome of the Elections

Following the previous (June 1982) general elections, Prime Minister Michael Somare was defeated in a parliamentary vote of no confidence in November 1985 and succeeded by his former Deputy, Mr. Paias Wingti, who thereupon headed a five-party coalition Government comprising his own People's Democratic Movement (PDM), the People's Progress Party (PPP), the National Party (NP), the United Party (UP) and the Melanesian Alliance (MA). The election dates were set on 29 March 1987.

Throughout the campaign, Prime Minister Wingti underlined his positive economic record (reduction of inflation, unemployment, government spending and income tax levies) since in office and promised above all to develop the agricultural sector. Mr. Somare, leader of the *Pangu Pati* group, aimed to regain power after heading the Government from 1975 to 1985. Altogether 1513 candidates (independents and members of 17 parties) contested the 109 parliamentary seats.

The occasionally violent voting process was scheduled over three weeks. Final results gave the PDM just 18 seats, but it subsequently struck alliances with four minor parties (PPP, UP, People's Action Party (PAP) and the Papua Party) and a group of independents. As a consequence, when Parliament met on 5 August to choose a new Prime Minister, Mr. Wingti was re-elected by a shaky but nevertheless decisive 54 to 51 plurality over Mr. Somare. The composition of his Cabinet was announced on 13 August.

## Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats  
in Parliament

Valid votes	2,708,937			
Political Group	Votes obtained		Number of Seats	Number of Seats held at Dissolution
<i>Pangu Pati</i>	398,506	14.7	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>
People's Democratic Movement (PDM)	292,081	10.8	18	20
National Party (NP)	138,755	5.1	12	11
Melanesian Alliance (MA)	150,600	5.6	7	4
People's Action Party (PAP)	87,767	3.2	<b>6</b>	3
People's Progress Party (PPP)	164,461	6.1	5	13
Morobe Independent Group (MIG)	60,922	2.2	4	—
League of National Advance- ment (LNA)	131,709	4.9	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
Papua Party	34,636	1.3	<b>3</b>	2
United Party (UP)	86,988	3.2	1	7
Other parties and independents	1,162,512	42.9	21	7
			106*	109

\* Plus three vacancies.