

Voter registration in Solomon Islands
Source: SIEC

Perception Survey for the Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)

Findings Report

April 2026

sustineo

Acknowledgements

The *Perception Survey for the Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP)* is supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and implemented by Sustineo Pty Ltd. SECSIP is implemented by the UNDP in partnership with the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission. It receives financial assistance from the European Union, the Australian Government and UNDP. Tess Newton Cain, Nicky Thatcher, Ngoc Trinh, Nathaniel Ives, Terence Wood, Kerryn Baker, Tom Sloan, Ali Thwaites and Kate Lanyon developed this report. In-country data collection was carried out by Asples Pacific Research and Dignity Pasifik.

This report was funded by UNDP. The views expressed in this publication are the authors' alone and are not necessarily the views of UNDP.

Reference

This paper can be referenced as:

Sustineo (2026) *Perception Survey for the Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands Project (SECSIP): Findings Report*, report to UNDP, Sustineo.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

Acronym	Description
APR	Asples Pacific Research
CDF	Constituency Development Funds
EMB	Electoral Management Body (SIEC)
FGD	Focus group discussion
F or M	Female or Male (in relation to key informants)
KII	Key informant interview
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-government Organisation
PM	Prime Minister
PwD	Person with a Disability
SECSIP	Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in Solomon Islands Project
SIEC	Solomon Islands Electoral Commission
SIICAC	Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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Executive Summary

The *Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project* (SECSIP), implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Solomon Islands, aims to support electoral institutions and processes throughout the full electoral cycle. This includes pre-election, election day, and post-election phases. SECSIP Phase III ran from 2023 to 2025 and encompassed the 2024 Solomon Islands elections, the first time National, Provincial and Honiara City Council held joint elections.

Sustineo was engaged by UNDP to undertake a study of public perceptions regarding the electoral process in Solomon Islands, in order to inform future SECSIP programming. As part of understanding the experiences and perceptions of voters in Solomon Islands, the study has three specific objectives.

- Identify the levels of voter confidence in the machinery of elections
- Identify levels of voter engagement with political processes
- Identify levels of satisfaction with political actors.

Key Findings

Voter confidence in the machinery of elections

- There is a large spread in voter level of trust in election processes, with almost equal numbers of voters demonstrating high or low levels of trust.
- Eligible voters in Honiara have lower levels of trust in election processes than those in Western, Isabel, and Central Provinces.
- Low trust is often attributed to concerns around bribery, vote buying (e.g. through Constituency Development Funds – CDFs) and unfair registration processes.
- There is a low level of awareness of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC).
- A high proportion of eligible voters believe that the 2024 Joint Election was better than previous elections, with the most popular reasons being that it was less expensive and easier for voters and the government to go through a single registration and election process.
- Key reasons why the 2024 election was considered worse than previous elections by some voters were that it was more confusing for voters and that it was unfair to provincial candidates who were not allowed to run in the national election.
- A majority of eligible voters feel that registration processes, election day voting, vote counting and the election of the Prime Minister (PM) are fair. However, while three quarters of people feel that voting on election day is fair, just over 50% of people feel that the way the PM is elected is fair.
- Compared to those in Honiara, eligible voters in Western and Isabel Provinces are more likely to perceive *voter registration* and *counting processes* as fair. Meanwhile, more eligible voters in Isabel consider the *actual voting process* to be fair, compared to Honiara.
- The most significant concern of those who perceived registration and voting to be unfair was that people from outside constituencies were able to register and

vote in those constituencies. Concerns about vote counting mostly related to various logistical challenges in the process.

- Just over half of voters believe that National Parliament is representative of different groups in Solomon Islands, with the biggest missing groups identified as women and people with disabilities. Interestingly, 31.1% of eligible voters believe that men are not sufficiently represented in parliament.
- Female voters are more likely to believe that National Parliament is representative than male voters.
- Eligible voters in provinces such as Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western and Isabel feel that parliament is more representative, while Honiara thinks it is less representative, and Central has the least confidence in parliament's representation.
- A lack of accessibility of voting and registration processes was also identified as a problem, particularly for people with disabilities. While some improvements were noted in the most recent election, challenges remain.

Voter engagement with political processes

- Survey findings support official research that eligible voter participation in registration and voting processes is high in Solomon Islands.
- Key Information Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) data suggests reasons for high voter turnout beyond political engagement, including fear, community obligations and promises of rewards through CDFs.
- Women were less likely to have actually voted than men in the 2024 Joint Elections. Reasons varied, with common responses including illness/pregnancy, being too busy, and not being able to travel to the voting place.
- Nearly three quarters of voters report that they voted according to their personal preference in the 2024 elections, and a similar number were aware that other people are not allowed to pressure you into voting as they wish. Those who could not vote based on their own preference reported that they were pressured to vote by parents, community leaders, spouses or church leaders.
- Women and young people reported that they are less likely to be able to vote according to their own preference. Female voters also believe that other adult women are less likely than men to be able to vote autonomously.
- Eligible voters found it useful to seek advice from others about their votes, particularly from their parents, political candidates and their spouses.
- While nearly 75% of eligible voters felt that they were able to vote according to their own preference, far fewer voters believe that other population groups can vote according to their own preference. There was particularly low confidence in the voting autonomy of adult women and young women. However, the lowest responses were for people with a disability, with less than 20% of voters believing that people with a disability can vote by personal preference.
- While a majority of eligible voters are aware that candidates are not allowed to find out who voted for them, over 50% still report that candidates do find out, most commonly from voters informing them directly, or from them hearing about it from other members of the community. This practice is supported by common practices of gift giving (including through CDFs) in exchange for people's votes.
- While over half of eligible voters would be willing to vote for a female candidate, very few have actually voted for a woman in the past, with the main reasons for

not voting for female candidates being a lack of opportunity (no female candidates) and a belief that they would not be able to win. When asked what it would take for them to vote for a female candidate, the most common response is for that woman to be better educated.

- There is no significant difference between the willingness and the experience of male and female voters in voting for a female candidate. However, older voters are more likely to have voted for a woman (likely due to their additional years of voting experience) and people with a disability are more willing to vote for a woman.
- There are a growing number of regular internet users in Solomon Islands, and over 50% believe that social media can influence people's decisions about how to vote. However, very few people report that they have ever posted about elections on social media, with those who have mostly posting about social issues, or in support of particular candidates.
- Almost 60% of eligible voters report that some sort of election awareness group visited their community in 2024, with three quarters of these indicating that it was a group from SIEC.

Voter satisfaction with political actors

- Eligible voters think Members of Parliament (MPs) should focus more on governing the country and on getting better conditions for all people in the constituency, and less on assisting those who voted for them.
- Nearly 10% of eligible voters report that they don't know what their MPs do, or believe that they do nothing.
- Over 50% of eligible voters are dissatisfied with their National and Provincial / City Council representations. Satisfaction with National MPs is slightly higher than with Provincial / City Council members.
- Satisfaction with both levels of representatives is lower in Central, and higher in Western and Isabel provinces, compared with Honiara.
- There is general frustration with government representatives who are seen to focus most on local issues, particularly on rewarding those who have voted for them, rather than on engaging with parliament and issues at the national level. However, providing support to voters is often what determines voters' support and is what gets candidates elected.
- Trust in all listed political actors fell below 50%, with the most trusted body being the court system, and the least being the new Solomon Islands Independent Commission Against Corruption (SIICAC) and the Provincial Governments / Honiara City Council.
- Eligible voters in Western and Isabel provinces tend to have a greater trust in political actors than those in Honiara, while eligible voters in Malaita have significantly lower levels of trust.
- The 43.9% of eligible voters who indicated they had low or very low trust in SIEC suggested that this was primarily because they don't hear much about their work, or because they are concerned about the influence of political leaders on SIEC and the lack of transparency and accountability in their work.

Considerations for future support

Aligned with the study's objectives to understand voter confidence in electoral machinery, engagement with political processes, and satisfaction with political actors, this section highlights areas UNDP could consider in shaping future support. The emphasis is on translating observed perceptions and experiences into practical directions for strengthening the integrity, inclusiveness and responsiveness of the electoral cycle.

- The importance of CDFs indicates that future support could explore how recent and planned legislative changes improve the problem of vote-buying, and increase trust and perceptions of electoral fairness.
- There is an interesting disparity between people's own perceived autonomy and the perceived autonomy of others, which suggests that there is an opportunity to enhance civic education and awareness.
- Norms around low voter secrecy might be addressed through working with churches, community leaders and other awareness partners.
- Reform of registration, polling and counting procedures, and clear communication of any rule changes could help address electoral fairness concerns.
- Work should continue to improve accessibility of all stages of the voting process (registration, voting day), but also candidature processes, for women, young people and people with disabilities.
- There remains a need to improve the logistics / consistency / transparency of some processes such as vote counting, venue accessibility and vote secrecy.
- There is a need for increased education about electoral processes in provinces outside of Honiara that have demonstrated mixed levels of trust and understanding.

Taken together, these considerations point to possible directions that could inform UNDP's decision-making on any future support to the electoral cycle in Solomon Islands. They highlight opportunities to build on existing strengths in electoral administration, while attending more closely to voter perceptions, information needs and inclusion.

1 Introduction

The *Strengthening the Electoral Cycle in the Solomon Islands Project* (SECSIP), implemented by UNDP Solomon Islands, aims to support electoral institutions and processes throughout the full electoral cycle. This includes pre-election, election day, and post-election phases.

Building on two previous iterations, SECSIP Phase III (2023-2025) was focused on fostering sustainable and inclusive democratic governance, with a particular emphasis on enhancing women's political participation and representation. There were four pillars to the work of SECSIP Phase III:

1. Strengthening institutional and operational capacities of electoral authorities
2. Improving voter information and civic engagement
3. Enhancing the legal electoral framework
4. Increasing women's leadership and political participation.

In April 2024, during Phase III, joint elections were held which combined national, provincial, and Honiara City Council elections.[1] These were the first joint elections in the history of Solomon Islands.

1.1 Purpose and objectives

The purpose of the study is to take stock of public perceptions regarding the electoral process in Solomon Islands. It is a strategic activity in that it will both assess trends and changes in perceptions over time related to the electoral process, and inform future programming under SECSIP, including identifying possible reform priorities.

As part of understanding the experiences and perceptions of voters in Solomon Islands, the study has three specific objectives.

- Identify the levels of voter confidence in the machinery of elections
- Identify levels of voter engagement with political processes
- Identify levels of satisfaction with political actors

1.2 Report structure

This report provides context and communicates the key findings of the Electoral Perceptions study in response to the three objectives above.

Section 1 provides some background to the project and the purpose of the study.

Section 2 gives a brief overview of the electoral system in Solomon Islands.

Section 3 is a summary of the study's methodology, which is explored in more detail in **Annex A**.

Section 4 presents the findings of the study. In this section, survey data, statistical testing to allow for data disaggregation, qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs and

[1] Excluding Provincial Assembly elections for Choiseul and Western provinces, which were not synchronised because they were held in late 2022. They are planned to be synchronised for the 2028 Joint Elections (SIEC 2025).

research findings from the desk review and previous studies are integrated to respond to the research questions.

Section 5 suggests several key considerations for the UNDP based on the findings of the study.

Annex A gives a detailed description of the study's methodology.

Annex B provides the unweighted profile of survey respondents.

Annex C contains the weighted demographic profile that has been used in most of the analysis and visualisation of survey data.

Annex D includes data from previous Sustineo studies that asked the same or similar questions of respondents as this survey.

Annex E contains the output tables for statistical testing conducted to explore statistically significant differences between demographic groups in the survey data.

HOW ELECTIONS WORK IN SOLOMON ISLANDS





PARLIAMENT

- Unicameral (single-chamber) Parliament
- **50** Members of Parliament from **50** single-member constituencies





VOTING

- General elections every **4** years
- Voting is **not** compulsory
- **First-past-the-post** voting: person with most vote elected





ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

- The **Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC)** is responsible for the conduct of national elections



2024 HISTORIC ELECTION

First-ever joint elections for 3 governing bodies



Provincial Assemblies



National Parliament



Honiara City Council

QUALITY OF GOVERNANCE

Electoral Democracy Index



Least democratic

Solomon Islands **0.67**

Most democratic

Corruption Perception Index



Highly corrupt

Solomon Islands **44**

Very clean

2 Electoral context in Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands has a unicameral (single chamber) Parliament, comprised of 50 Members of Parliament (MPs) elected from the 50 single-member constituencies (SIEC 2024). General elections are held every 4 years, with a "first-past-the-post" or "winner takes all" voting system, meaning that the person who receives the most votes is elected, even if they do not have a majority (SIEC 2024; Wood 2025). Voting is not compulsory, but voter turnout is typically high. There have been 12 successful national elections held since Solomon Islands achieved independence in 1978 (Wiltshire et al. 2024).

The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) is responsible for the conduct of national elections, with their role and mandate established by the Constitution and the *Electoral Act 2018* (as amended). SIEC has been engaged in a program of reform, including:

- 2014: introduction of a biometric voter registration system to address challenges including multiple registrations and voter fraud.
- 2018: introduction of the *Electoral Act 2018*, which amended voter registration and vote counting procedures, and brought in stricter penalties for electoral offences.
- 2019: introduction of batch-based vote counting procedures and out-of-constituency registration, allowing voters to more easily change their enrolment to a different constituency. Out-of-constituency registration was abolished for the 2024 elections.
- 2024: joint elections, with national, provincial and Honiara City Council elections occurring simultaneously nationwide.

SIEC works with a range of external stakeholders involved in the electoral process, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Summary of external stakeholders that the SIEC engages with.
Source: Reproduced from SIEC 2025.

Some key issues relating to Solomon Islands' electoral processes and linked to the SECSIP objectives relate to women's participation in electoral processes, constituency development funds, and the nature of independent/party politics:

- Women's participation in electoral registration and voting has generally been on par with men (Maharjan 2019); however, barriers exist to women contesting and winning seats in elections (Baker 2024; Wiltshire et al. 2024; WRAM and IWDA 2019).
- Constituency Development Funds (CDFs), where money is allocated for constituency-level spending under the control of MPs, have played a significant role in voter decision-making since their introduction in the early 1990s, and have often favoured incumbents (Baker 2022). This is explored in more detail in **Box 3**.
- As described by Wood (2025), individuals usually make decisions about who to vote for based on the candidates' individual attributes, rather than voting along party lines. This results in parliaments which are often unstable coalitions of small parties and independents. It also results in an essentially two-stage election process:

  > Weak parties, independent MPs, and fluid alliances also lead to elections that are effectively held in two phases: voters elect MPs and then MPs enter into negotiations in which competing blocs of MPs strive to pull together a governing coalition. (Wood 2025:2).

In 2024, the V-Dem Electoral Democracy Index gave Solomon Islands a score of 0.67 (where 1 indicates the highest level of democracy) (V-Dem 2026). This places the country above the global average[2] of 0.39. Similarly, Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index 2025 scored Solomon Islands as 44 out of 100, naming it as a 'flawed democracy'. With this score, Solomon Islands is just one point below the Asia-Pacific average of 45, and two points above the global average of 42 (Transparency International 2026). However, Transparency Solomon Islands has highlighted that elections pose a specific corruption risk, with reference to vote buying and the use of both public funds and international finance for political purposes (Eremae 2026).

[2] Population-weighted average.

PERCEPTION SURVEY FOR SECSIP: METHODOLOGY

PROJECT AIMS

To inform future SECSIP programming

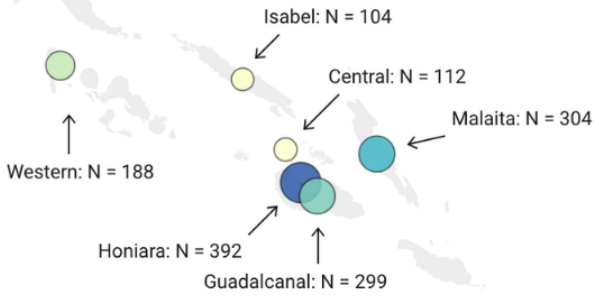
RESEARCH AREAS

- Voter confidence in elections
- Voter engagement with political processes
- Satisfaction with political actors

MIXED METHODS

- Literature review
- Perception survey
- Key informant interviews
- Focus group discussions

SURVEY: 1,399 respondents



Survey **weighted** to reflect the voting-age population across the six sampled locations.

QUALITATIVE DATA

5 x Key informant interviews
With key stakeholders, expert and interest groups

12 x Focus group discussions
With communities in all samped provinces and Honiara

3 Methodology

Sustineo's methodology for this project was designed and refined in collaboration with UNDP and our on-the-ground data collection teams. This was facilitated through regular correspondence between the project team and UNDP, and by Sustineo drafting documents such as a *Work Plan* and a *Logistics and Mobilisation Plan*, which were submitted to UNDP for feedback and revised to ensure that they suited the capacity and needs of the client and all project partners.

Sustineo employed a mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis over the project, which involved both qualitative and quantitative data sources. These processes saw contributions from all partners in the research team.

This mixed-methods approach included:

Method	Description	Responsibility
Literature review	The literature review established the foundation drawing on previous research related to electoral processes, political participation, and voter perceptions in Solomon Islands. It informed both the study design, as well as the integrative reporting.	Sustineo
Perception survey	The survey gauged public perceptions regarding the electoral process in Solomon Islands. It was administered to a representative sample of eligible voters across the target provinces and formed the primary basis for reporting.	APR leadership; Dignity Pasifik enumerators; Sustineo oversight
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	The FGDs extended and deepened the insights gained from the perception survey. FGDs were held with community members in each provincial capital and with special interest groups in Honiara.	APR leadership; Dignity Pasifik enumerators; Sustineo oversight
Key informant interviews	Key informant interviews were used to socialise the survey with key actors and agencies at an early stage in the research process. They were also used to collect additional qualitative data to supplement the desk review and the survey data.	Sustineo
Survey data analysis	Analysis of survey data including cleaning, analysing through R and comparing results to previous datasets where appropriate.	Sustineo
Qualitative data analysis	Qualitative analysis of FGD and KII data involved thematic coding of transcripts and notes to extract key themes and findings.	Sustineo
Integrative analysis	Insights from the literature review have been integrated with survey and qualitative data to draw out insights into electoral perceptions and participation. This includes comparisons with data from previous surveys where appropriate.	Sustineo

For more detail on research ethics, methods, sampling, analysis and limitations, see **Annex A**.

For the respondent profile, see **Annex B** and **C**.

4 Findings

Box 1: Interpreting survey results

All results from the current survey presented in this section are based on population-weighted data (see **Annex A** for how population weights were determined). This means the survey responses have been adjusted to reflect the actual distribution of the eligible voting-age population in the six sampled provinces (Honiara, Malaita, Guadalcanal, Western, Isabel, and Central Province).

As a result, the figures do not show the percentage of survey respondents who selected each answer. Instead, they represent the proportion of the eligible voting-age population in the sampled provinces who hold each view or experience.

For example, if a figure shows that 38.2% of respondents have high trust in how elections are run, this means that approximately 38.2% of the eligible voting-age population in the sampled provinces share that view.

Some figures include 95% confidence intervals (shown as ranges or error bars). A 95% confidence interval provides a margin of uncertainty around the estimate. It indicates the range within which the true population value is likely to fall, based on the survey sample.

For example, if a proportion is 38.2% with a 95% confidence interval of 32%–44.5%, this means that, accounting for variation, the true proportion in the population is 95% likely to fall between 32% and 44.5%. Unless otherwise stated, all percentages in this report are weighted estimates.

Annex B provides the unweighted (raw) profile of survey respondents for reference.

Box 2: Comparison with findings from previous UNDP surveys

UNDP and others have previously conducted similar surveys on electoral and government processes in the Solomon Islands, including:

- 2015 SIEC Voter Awareness Survey (Sustineo 2015)
- 2017 Perception of Peacebuilding Survey (Sustineo 2017)
- 2019 Women Leader Survey (Sustineo 2019)
- 2020 Civic Engagement Survey (Sustineo 2020)

Each of these surveys employed different sampling strategies, levels of geographic coverage, and weighting approaches. As a result, they differ in terms of representation and methodological design, and therefore the findings are not directly comparable across surveys.

The current Perception Survey builds on similar question sets used in these earlier studies and explores related themes. Data collected in previous studies is in **Annex D** and cross referenced in the main body of the report. References to previous results are provided for contextual purposes only and should not be interpreted as evidence of trends or changes over time.

Box 3: Statistical testing



To assess the relationships between respondent characteristics and key outcome variables, Sustineo conducted a series of statistical hypothesis tests. The methodology, model specifications, and result tables are presented in **Annex E**.

Throughout this report, we refer to findings as "significantly different," "significantly higher," or "significantly lower." These terms mean that the differences observed in the data are based on a standard statistical significance threshold of 95 percent, or a 1 in 20 chance to be a false positive. In other words, we have reasonable confidence that these differences reflect real patterns in the population, rather than random variation. This language does not mean that the magnitude of the difference is large.

The analysis focuses on identifying statistically significant associations rather than causal relationships.

Using outputs from the statistical tests, marginal plots were also produced for some variables. These plots show the predicted probabilities that different demographic groups would choose each response option for a given question.

4.1 Voter confidence in the machinery of elections

Voter Confidence – Key Findings

- There is a large spread in voter level of trust in election processes, with almost equal numbers of voters demonstrating high or low levels of trust.
- Eligible voters in Honiara have lower levels of trust in election processes than those in Western, Isabel, and Central Provinces.
- Low trust is often attributed to concerns around bribery, vote buying (e.g., through CDFs) and unfair registration processes.
- There is a low level of awareness of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC).
- A high proportion of eligible voters believe that the 2024 Joint Election was better than previous elections, with the most popular reasons being that it was less expensive and easier for voters and the government to go through a single registration and election process.
- Key reasons why the 2024 election was considered worse than previous elections by some voters were that it was more confusing for voters and that it was unfair to provincial candidates who were not allowed to run in the national election.
- A majority of eligible voters feel that registration processes, election day voting, vote counting and the election of the PM are fair. However, while three quarters of people feel that voting on election day is fair, just over 50% of people feel that the way the PM is elected is fair.
- Compared to those in Honiara, eligible voters in Western and Isabel Provinces are more likely to perceive voter registration and counting processes as fair. Meanwhile, more eligible voters in Isabel consider the actual voting process to be fair, compared to Honiara.
- The most significant concern of those who perceived registration and voting to be unfair was that people from outside constituencies were able to register and vote in those constituencies. Concerns about vote counting mostly related to various logistical challenges in the process.
- Just over half of voters believe that National Parliament is representative of different groups in Solomon Islands, with the biggest missing groups identified as women and people with disabilities. Interestingly, 31.1% of eligible voters believe that men are not sufficiently represented in parliament.
- Female voters are more likely to believe that National Parliament is representative than male voters.
- Eligible voters in provinces such as Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western and Isabel feel that parliament is more representative, while Honiara thinks it is less representative, and Central has the least confidence in parliament's representation.
- A lack of accessibility of voting and registration processes was also identified as a problem, particularly for people with disabilities. While some improvements were noted in the most recent election, challenges remain.

TRUST IN ELECTIONS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS



More voters **distrust** elections than **trust** them

46.2%	vs.	43.1%
Low or very low trust		High or very high trust

Neutral or unsure: 10.6 %

REASONS FOR LOW TRUSTS IN ELECTIONS

26.7%
Bribery of officials

26.3%
Vote buying

22.1%
Registration process is unfair

> *...if the person registering is unwanted, the registration officer can squeeze his paper and throw it away so his name does not appear in the registration list.*
>
> **– Focus group discussion participant**

AREAS THAT NEED REFORM

- Political financing
- Party & electoral frameworks
- Voter registration rules
- Accessibility & inclusion

Perceptions of the electoral process in Solomon Islands

Trust in the electoral process

Participants in both the KIIs and FGDs consistently identified elections as important in Solomon Islands. Elections were seen as the main avenue for people to influence leadership of the country and were described by several participants (particularly in FGDs) as an expression of citizenship and civic duty. Some FGD participants also drew a link between elections and development outcomes, seeing elections as a way to access things like improved services, livelihoods, peace, and law and order. This occurs in Solomon Islands in a direct sense by way of Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) (see **Box 4**). However, the disconnect between voter choice and formation of government means that the link between elections and national development outcomes is not straightforward.

Figure 2 demonstrates a diversity in voters' levels of trust in how elections are run in Solomon Islands from the survey data. 46.5% of eligible voters have a low or very low level of trust in these processes, while 42.9% have a high or very high level of trust. Respondents identified a variety of reasons for their mistrust (Figure 3), with the most commonly reported issues being bribery of officials, vote buying, and unfair voter registration processes.

Significance testing (see **Annex E**) shows no evidence that age, gender, or disability status are associated with trust in how elections are run. However, trust varies by geographic location. Compared to respondents in Honiara, those in Malaita Province have significantly lower odds of reporting trust in electoral processes. In contrast, respondents in Western, Isabel, and Central provinces have significantly higher odds of reporting trust in how elections are conducted.

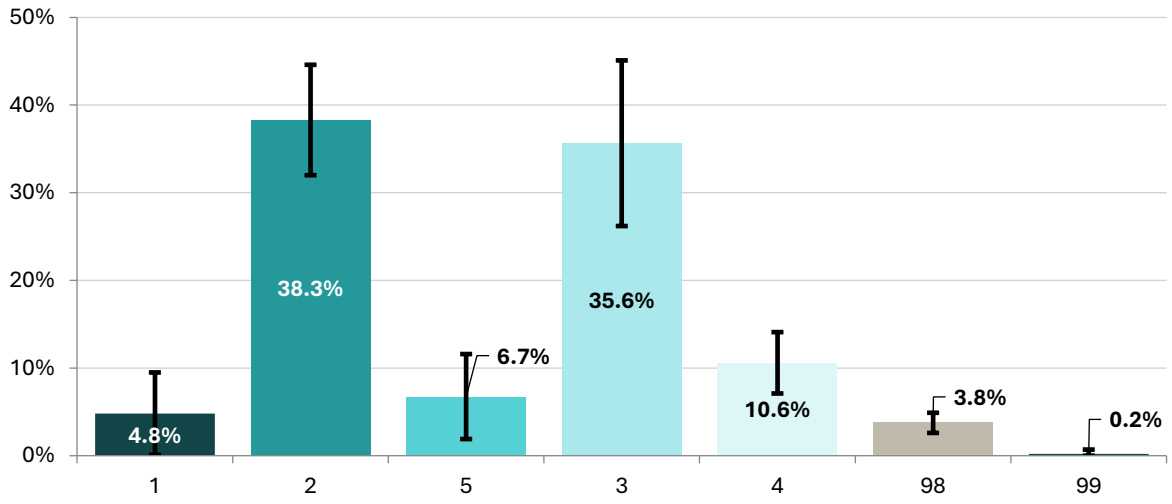


Figure 2: Trust in how elections are run in the Solomon Islands (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

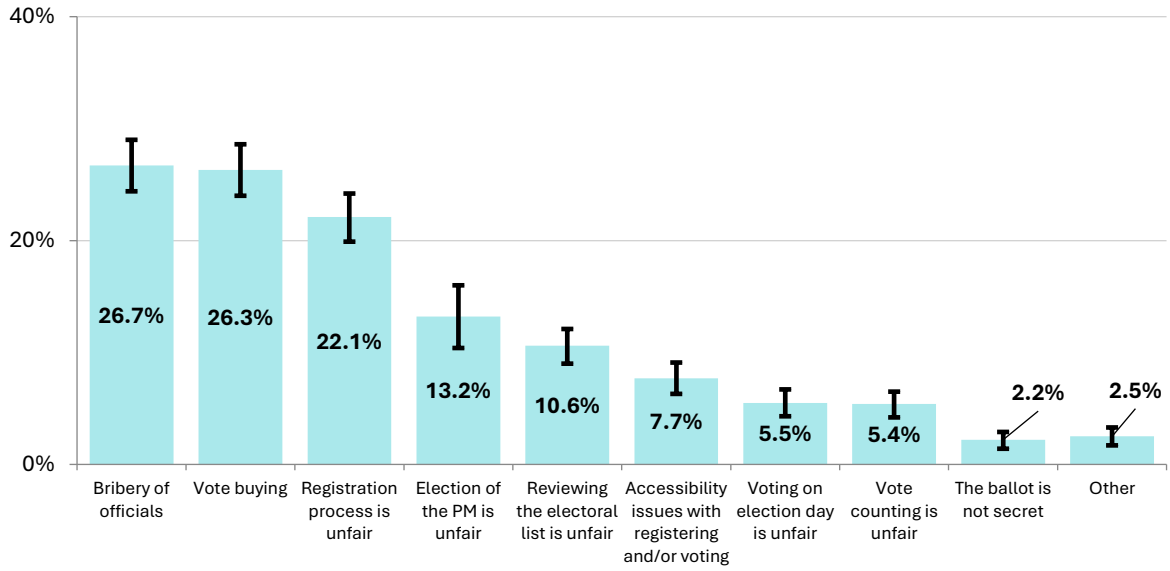


Figure 3: Reasons for low or very low trust in how elections are run in the Solomon Islands (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. As a result, the values in the table do not sum to 100%. This question was asked only of respondents who reported low or very low trust in how elections are run in Solomon Islands.

Trust in the election process was similarly variable among KII and FGD participants – very few participants expressed high levels of trust in election processes, and most raised concerns. One notable exception was a key informant from the SIEC, who stated:

> I trust it [the electoral process] 100% in the sense that the process that we do, and the way we provide the election service. That, I trusted it fully, but there are small, very few gaps that we need to improve on, especially in terms of recruitment of our field workers... (KII 003, M)

Broadly, participants showed higher trust for polling-day processes compared to registration and awareness (as seen in survey data in Figure 8), but there was a wide array of issues that people were concerned about. These varied across groups, but similarly to the survey data (Figure 3) included: vote buying, issues with registration processes, hiring of wantoks[3] as electoral officers, fear and violence (due to 'blackout night'[4] and a belief that MPs know who voted for them), manipulation of voters due to insufficient voter awareness, tampering with ballot boxes, cross-border registration, insufficient privacy during voting, and concerns about the biometric system. The quotes below highlight some of these concerns:

> ...it's corrupted from day one to when we actually run the election, when we count the results, it's all hijacked. It's all corrupted (KII 001, F)

[3] Wantok is a pidgin term which translates literally as 'one talk' (i.e. we speak the same language) but is used more colloquially to refer to people from family, kinship or community networks. The implication here is that employment opportunities are allocated on the basis of wantok connections rather than on a merit-based system.

[4] This is a practice whereby a candidate (or more likely the campaign team) gathers together people who have promised them their votes and keeps them at a venue overnight the night before the election (with refreshments) prior to transporting them to the polling station the next day so that they can cast their votes.

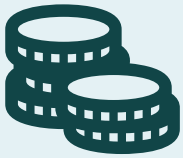
> ...if the person registering is unwanted, the registration officer can squeeze his paper and throw it away so his name does not appear in the registration list (FGD 006, M)

It is notable that these concerns with election processes remain widespread, despite observers from the 2024 elections reporting strong compliance and competent administration by the SIEC (Wiltshire et al. 2024). Many of the reasons given for distrust in the electoral system relate to issues that are external to it. Examples include vote buying and the election of the Prime Minister. Other concerns appear to be about the rules themselves rather than the way they are applied or enforced.

Participants in KIIs and FGDs identified several areas of concern they felt should be addressed in relation to how elections are conducted. These were broadly related to:

- Reform of political financing, CDFs (see **Box 4**) and candidate influence
- Strengthening the political party and electoral system framework
- Reform of voter registration and constituency rules
- Improving accessibility, inclusion and participation (including civic education)
- Logistical, procedural and technological reforms.

Box 4: Constituency Development Funds (CDFs) and the electoral process



CDFs are allocations of public development funds provided to constituencies to support initiatives as per constituency development priorities, and have been in use in Solomon Islands since the early 1990s (Baker 2022). The use of these funds has historically been managed by the elected MPs and has been associated with high incumbent re-election rates and the lower numbers of candidates contesting elections in recent years (Baker 2022). This trend changed in the 2024 election, as candidate numbers increased and incumbent re-election fell (Wood 2025).

Although this research did not include any explicit focus on CDFs, they were often raised by participants in KIIs and FGDs. Many participants emphasised that CDFs influence voter behaviour, driven by a widespread perception that MPs will be able to figure out who voted for them. One Key Informant (from an international anti-corruption NGO) gave descriptions of how this influence occurs:

> ... what member does is he gives roofing iron. He allocates roofing iron for the wife, for the husband and for the children, including one that is still in primary school. And you know, you put two and two together, those two are not sleeping in different houses. Their children are not sleeping [in different houses]. So you know exactly what those are for. And this guy then goes through the community, in his village, and he said, "If you like roofing iron for us, I've got roofing iron." And they go there. And [they] said "Okay, I'll get the roofing iron." And [he] said, "Okay, you get the roofing iron. You make sure you vote for him. So I've got your name in my list as one of the ones that have got assistance from the member." (KII 001, F)

> The other way is three months to four months prior to the election, the chiefs as well as church leaders [and] pastors, they go and pray with families. After the prayer, they said, "Do you need any help?" If they say, yes, then they [the church leaders and chiefs] go and write their name in the receipt book, and then they will receive help, and [they] will tell them that "the help comes from so and so [the MP]. So make sure, come election time you vote for him." (KII 001, F)

> ...come election time you vote for [the MP] because this [the resources] is from you, and all those names and whatnot are returned to the campaign managers as well as

> the member himself. So after the election, he'll have his list at his door, if you go in there, he [will say], "If your name is on the list, then I can help you. If not, sorry." (KII 001, F)

This same belief was evident in some of the FGDs:

> They only help those who voted for them. (FGD 010, M)

While there is no way for MPs to get information about who voted for them from the electoral system, it seems that their campaign managers[5] in each village use local networks and family ties to determine who voted for their candidate (though this information is imperfect).

A key informant from the SIEC also acknowledged that CDFs are a major contributing factor to the high voter turnout for elections:

> The [CDF] plays a vital role in moving people to come and participate in the electoral process.... you have to be on the roll in order for you to access that [funding]... It would be a different result if there is no [CDF]" (KII 003, M)

The *Constituency Development Act* 2023 came into force in December 2024 (after the most recent elections) and creates a new governance system, in which constituency development projects are considered by a Constituency Development Committee, with Ministerial approval required. The regulations to support this legislation are in the process of being finalised. Given the very recent nature of these changes, it is not surprising that they were not referenced in any of the FGDs or KIIs that were undertaken as part of this research, with respondents focused instead on the way CDFs have functioned previously.

There is some evidence that suggests that access to CDFs is also difficult to navigate, with certain community members, particularly those with disabilities, finding it much more difficult. This perpetuates and entrenches inequalities within communities (Baker and Kelly 2025).

[5] KII and FGD respondents referred to 'campaign managers' who were the representatives of candidates in particular wards or communities. These campaign managers promote their candidates in the community, and may also hold lists of voters and potentially of who voted for which candidate. Some sources refer to this role in a Melanesian context as a campaign coordinator (e.g. Meki 2024).

Awareness of SIEC

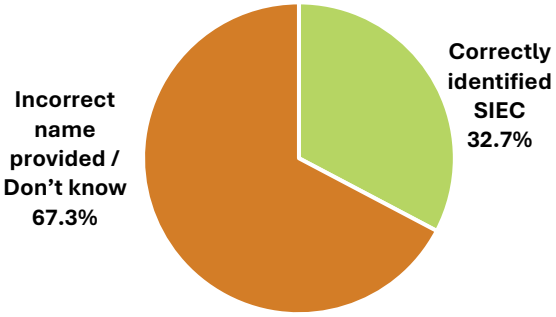


Figure 4: Whether eligible voters know the name of the organisation that runs elections in Solomon Islands (population-weighted estimates)

There is low public awareness of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC). Among eligible voters, only an estimated 32.7% can correctly identify SIEC as the body responsible for administering elections in the Solomon Islands. The remaining voters either report that they do not know which organisation runs elections or incorrectly name another institution.

Similarly, Sustineo's study on civic knowledge surrounding the 2019 elections found that respondents had very limited knowledge of accountability institutions—such as the Leadership Code Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman and the Office of the Auditor General—and that women and people from rural areas tended to have lower knowledge of these institutions (Sustineo 2020). It is concerning that the awareness of SIEC is similarly low, given that people directly engage with them through elections at a much higher rate than with these other institutions such as the Office of the Ombudsman.



SIEC awareness program – GESI Launch, 2023
Source: UNDP

Perceptions of 2024 Joint Elections

In 2024 for the first time, the National General Elections were held jointly with provincial and city council elections.[6] The survey found a plurality of respondents (44.1%) felt that the 2024 elections were better than the previous elections; however, there was still a large number of respondents who felt that the process was the same or worse (Figure 5). It is not possible to say whether this sense of 'better' is related to the joint nature of the elections or to an overall improvement in electoral quality. The most commonly cited reason for people to consider these elections an improvement was that it was less expensive for voters to participate (Figure 6). Conversely, several reasons why this election was worse were identified, including that it was unfair to provincial candidates who could not run in national elections, and confusing for voters who had too many candidates to consider across multiple elections (Figure 7).

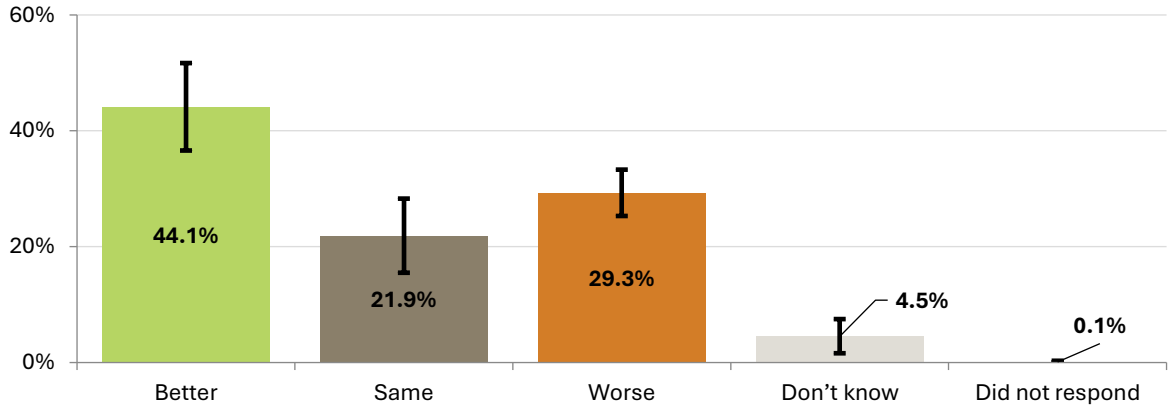


Figure 5: Assessment of the 2024 Joint Elections, compared to the previous elections (population-weighted, 95% confidence interval)

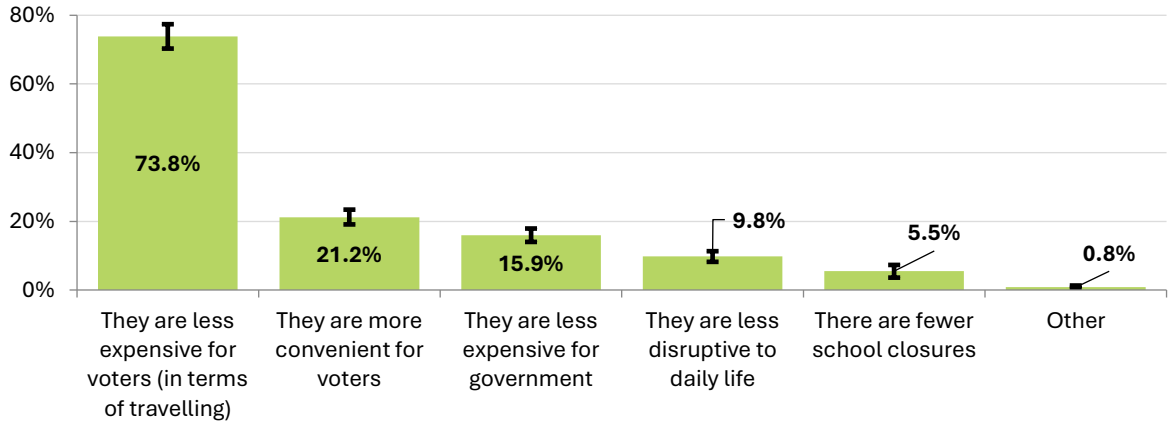


Figure 6: Reasons why the 2024 Joint Election was better compared to the previous election (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was asked only of respondents who believed the 2024 Joint Elections were better compared to the previous elections.

[6] Excluding Provincial Assembly elections for Choiseul and Western provinces, which were not synchronised because they were held in late 2022. They are planned to be synchronised for the 2028 Joint Elections (SIEC 2025).

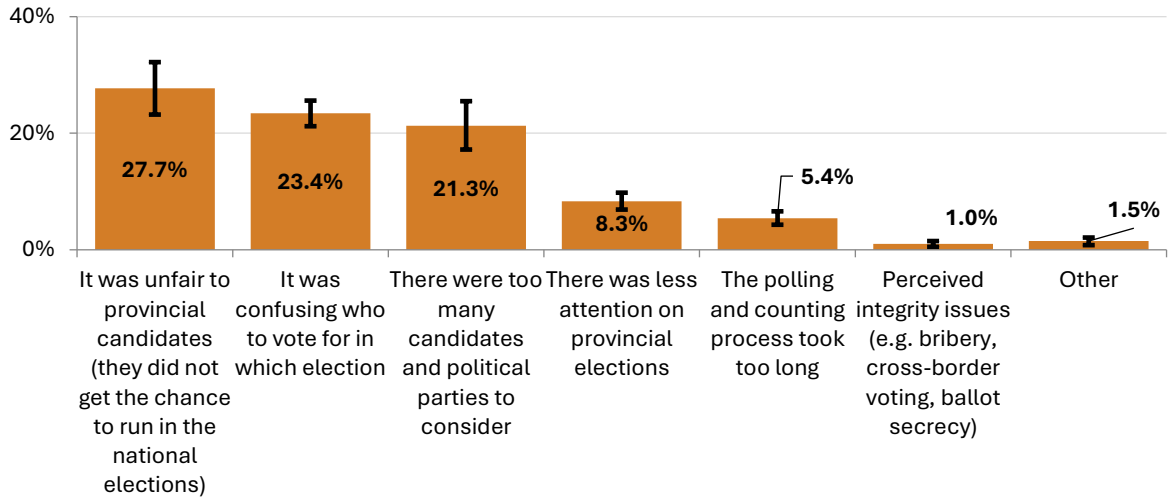


Figure 7: Reasons why the 2024 Joint Election was worse compared to the previous election (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was asked only of respondents who believed the 2024 Joint Elections were worse compared to the previous elections.

Similarly, in the KIIs and FGDs, perceptions of the joint elections were mixed, with almost all participants identifying both advantages and disadvantages to the joint elections. The most identified advantage was that having joint elections saved the government money. Many participants also noted that having joint elections saves people time for registration and voting compared to having separate elections. It is noteworthy that the advantages are practical and/or economic rather than focused on an improved exercise of democratic process.

> I think in terms of cost savings it's a good thing. It saves our country a lot of money. But it also helps people to vote their provincial and national leaders at the same time and on the same day, which is a good thing. (KII 005, M)

One key informant from the SIEC also suggested that holding joint elections resulted in more candidates campaigning with parties, rather than as independents, which was seen as positive. While 65% of candidates in the national election contested under party banners in 2024, compared to 49% in the 2019 elections (Wiltshire et al. 2024), there is no evidence to indicate that this is due to the joint election process specifically.

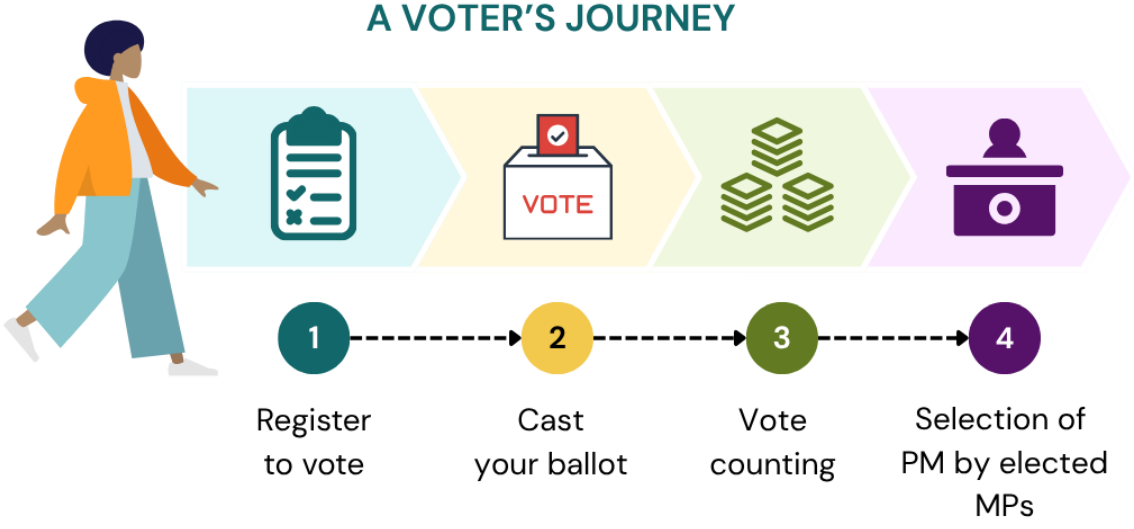
However, many participants, particularly in the FGDs, also said that there was confusion about the joint election – often describing it as 'rushed' – and that there was a lack of voter education (particularly for marginalised groups). For example:

> The joint election in 2024 is not good. We went to polling day but we do not know what their roles are.... We do not know so we don't have the power to hold him accountable (FGD 003, F)

A significant aspect of the 2024 elections that did not come up in the FGDs or the KIIs was their delay. The elections were due to be held in 2023 but were delayed by the then government because of a clash with the Pacific Games (Lyons 2022). Whilst this was very controversial at the time, it was not mentioned by any of the participants in this research project.

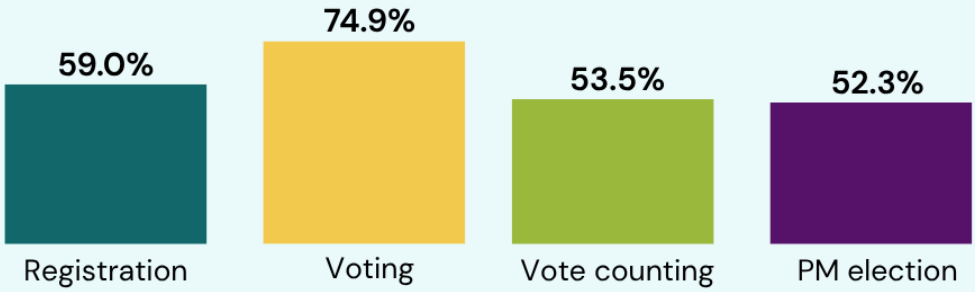
ARE ELECTIONS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS FAIR?

A VOTER'S JOURNEY



PERCEIVED FAIRNESS IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

Share of eligible voters who said each stage was fair



MOST COMMON REASON FOR UNFAIRNESS

Share of eligible voters who said each stage was NOT fair, citing this reason

REGISTRATION

People from outside my constituency registered in my constituency

30.4%

VOTING

Some voters are not from my constituency



10.7%

COUNTING

Counting was delayed



17%

Perceptions of democratic processes

Perceived fairness of the electoral process

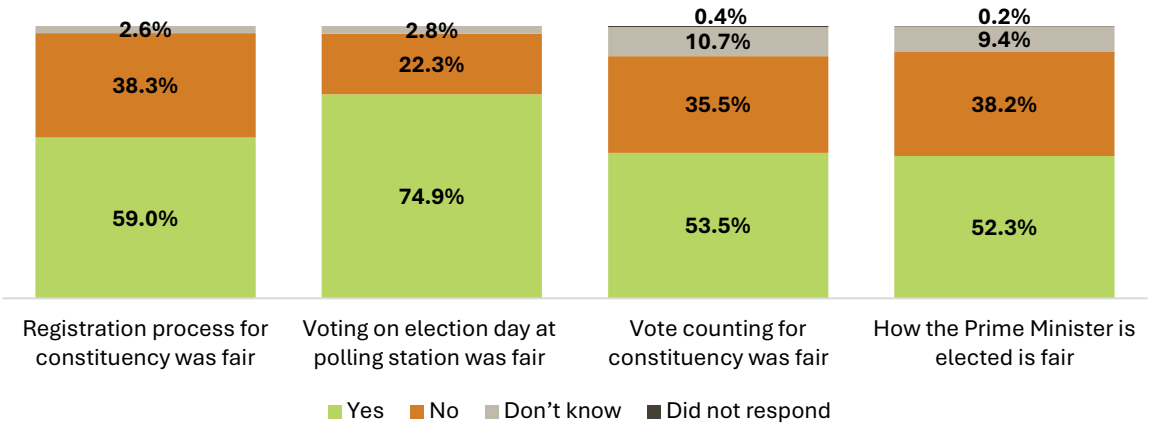


Figure 8: Perceived fairness of democratic processes (population-weighted, 95% confidence interval)

Figure 8 shows that a large majority of voters perceive election day voting as being fair, while fewer see the registration, vote counting, and the election of the Prime Minister (PM) processes as fair. Responses to this question from the 2020 survey can be seen in **Annex D**. Voters in the 2019 election similarly felt that polling day processes were fairer than registration or the election of the PM (Sustineo 2020).

Statistical testing also shows that eligible voters in Western and Isabel Provinces are significantly more likely to perceive the voter registration and counting processes as fair. In terms of the voting process itself, only eligible voters in Isabel are significantly more likely to rate it as fair compared to Honiara, while other provinces show no statistically significant differences from Honiara (**Annex E**).

The tables below list the reasons identified by voters for why registration processes (Table 1), voting (Table 2) and vote counting (Table 3) were perceived to be unfair. A key concern was that people were registering or voting outside of their constituency. This was also the biggest concern in the 2019 election (Sustineo 2020). Most concerns about vote counting in the 2024 elections were around logistical challenges, such as delayed counting, mistakes made by officials, and the counting centres being insecure. Broadly, these issues are consistent with the reasons respondents identified for not trusting electoral processes explored above (Figure 3).

Table 1: Reasons why the *registration process* was not perceived to be fair (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Choice	Percentage of respondents mentioned	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower (%)	Upper (%)
People from outside my constituency registered in my constituency	30.4	14.3	18.1
People from my constituency were not able to register	16.2	6	8.7
Roll contains names of people who no longer live here or have died	7.4	2	3.8
Short timeframe for registration	2.9	0.8	2.1
Electoral staff did not visit my community	1.5	0.7	1.9
Registered name do not appear on voting list	1.3	0.3	1.2
Underage voters registered	0.7	0.9	2.1
Other	1.5	14.3	18.1

Table 2: Reasons why *voting* was not perceived to be fair (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Choice	Percentage of respondents mentioned	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower (%)	Upper (%)
Some voters not from my constituency	10.7	9.1	12.3
Vote-buying or gifting	8.4	7	9.8
People around polling station trying to influence voters	7.5	6.2	8.9
Biased polling staff	6	4.8	7.2
Registered voters' names did not appear on the voter list	5.4	4.2	6.6
People not able to vote	4.8	3.7	5.9
There were people voting multiple times	2.8	1.9	3.6
The polling station not accessible	2.6	1.8	3.4
Ballot boxes not correctly sealed	2.3	1.5	3.1
The candidates know who I vote for	1.7	1	2.3
Not safe for me to vote	1.4	0.8	2
Other	0.2	0	0.4

Table 3: Reasons why *vote counting* was not perceived to be fair (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

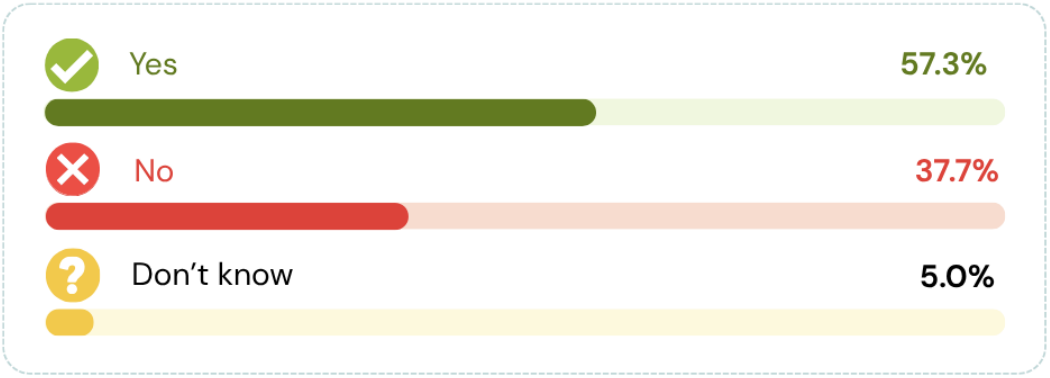
Choice	Percentage of respondents mentioned	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower (%)	Upper (%)
Counting delayed	17	15.1	19
Counting officials made mistakes	15.9	14	17.8
The counting centre not secure	11.2	9.6	12.8
Not all ballot boxes were counted	6.6	5.3	7.8
Ballot boxes not correctly sealed	6.1	4.9	7.3
Results sent to the EC not the same as the results at the counting centre	6.1	4.8	7.3
Candidates' scrutineers not allowed to watch the counting	3.1	2.2	4
Don't know	1.2	0.6	1.7
Counting results leaked	0.6	0.2	1
Other	2.5	1.7	3.3

Note (for all three tables above): Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was only asked of respondents who believed that the voter registration / voting / counting process was not fair.

HOW REPRESENTATIVE IS THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT?

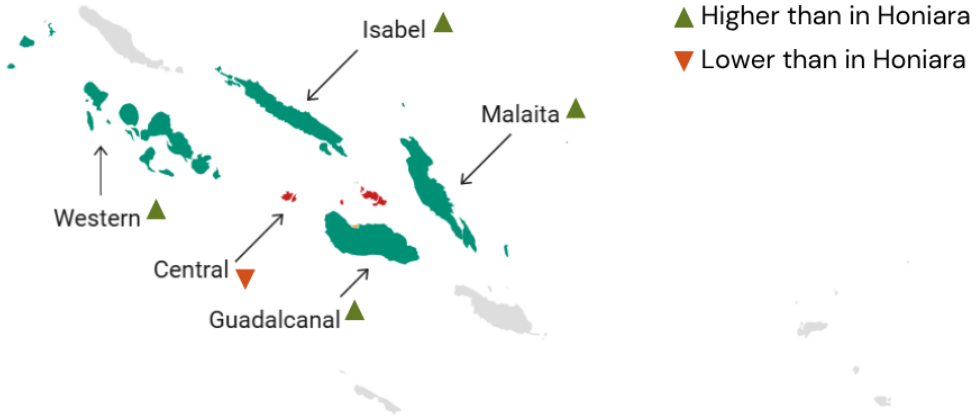


Is the National Parliament representative of different groups in Solomon Islands society?



GEOGRAPHICAL DISPARITIES

Perceptions of whether the National Parliament is representative **differ across provinces**



WHO IS UNDERREPRESENTED?

Share of eligible voters identifying each group as **lacking** representation in the National Parliament



53.9%
Women

51.9%
People with disabilities

31.1%
Men

27.2%
Young people

Satisfaction with the inclusiveness of electoral process

When asked whether the National Parliament is representative of different groups in society, 57.3% of voters responded in the affirmative (Figure 9). This result is slightly lower than in the 2020 survey, but the biggest difference between the results in the two surveys was a decrease in the proportion of voters who responded that they "don't know" (Sustineo 2020). This suggests again that people may be more informed or feel more confident commenting on government and election-related issues. However, as previously identified, because of sampling differences comparison between these results should be treated with caution.

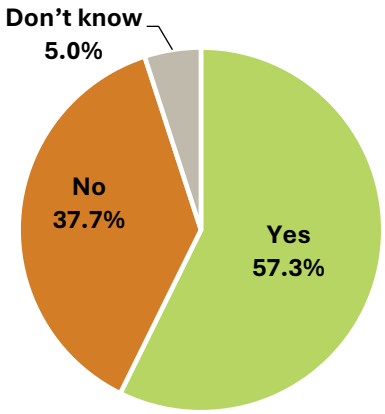


Figure 9: Perceptions of whether the National Parliament is representative of different groups in Solomon Islands society (e.g., women, young people, people from different provinces) (population-weighted estimate)

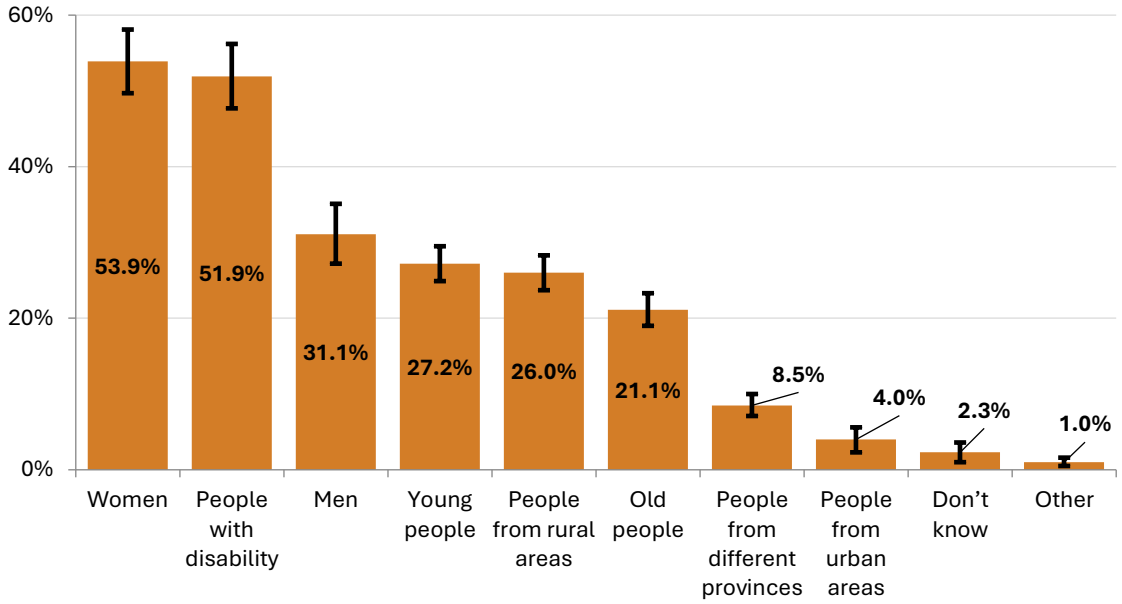


Figure 10: Voter perceptions of groups that are not represented in the National Parliament (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was asked only of respondents who believed the National Parliament is not representative of different groups in Solomon Islands society.

For those voters who do not think that the parliament is representative, the missing groups are identified most as women and people with disabilities (Figure 10). It is interesting that over 30% of voters seemed concerned that men are not represented in the national parliament. This suggests perhaps a lack of understanding of the question. Alternatively, it may indicate that the men were articulating a perception that their views or positions are not adequately represented in the Parliament.[7]

Significance testing (see **Annex E**) shows that compared to men, women are more likely to believe that the National Parliament is representative of different groups in the society. This is interesting given that, as described above, women are most often perceived as a group not represented in parliament. Specifically, the predicted proportion of eligible female voters who believed that the National Parliament is representative is around 71%, while only 49.9% of eligible male voters believe in representativeness (Figure 11).



Figure 11: Predicted proportion of each group who said the National Parliament is representative
*Note: Estimates are derived from marginal effects based on regression analysis. See **Annex E** for details on model specification and interpretation.*

There are also geographical disparities, with Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western, and Isabel more likely to believe that the National Parliament is representative compared to Honiara. Meanwhile, respondents from Central are significantly less likely to believe that the National Parliament is representative, compared to those in Honiara. Specifically, around 45.6% of eligible voters in Honiara agreed that the National Parliament is representative. This is lower than the corresponding proportions in Guadalcanal (63.9%), Malaita (58.2%), Western (87.0%), and Isabel (54.0%), but higher than in Central Province, where only 33.9% of respondents expressed this view (Figure 12).

[7] The current makeup of the Solomon Islands parliament after the 2024 election and subsequent by-elections is 46 men and 4 women (National Parliament of Solomon Islands 2026).

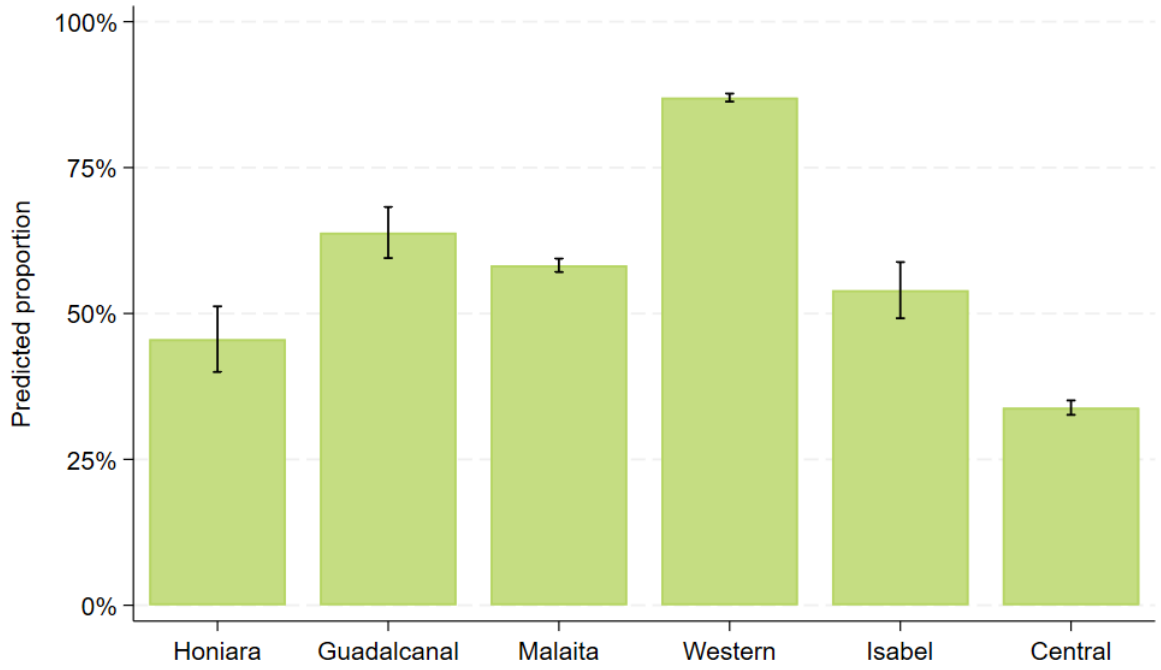


Figure 12: Predicted proportion of each group who said the National Parliament is representative
*Note: Estimates are derived from marginal effects based on regression analysis. See **Annex E** for details on model specification and interpretation*

Discussions in KIIs and FGDs tended to focus on inclusion in voting and registration processes rather than in the parliament, but a small number of participants noted that men are dominating parliament, with one highlighting Temporary Special Measures (TSM) as a positive step to increasing women's participation.

There were no survey questions in the 2025 survey specifically focused on the accessibility of voting processes to particular groups in society, although 7.6% of voters identified a lack of accessibility as a reason for distrusting electoral processes (Figure 3). However, this was a common topic in KIIs and FGDs. Inclusion was broadly described as essential by participants but was overall not seen to be facilitated in practice. Poor accessibility of registration and voting for people with disabilities was raised by many participants as a problem, particularly in the FGD focused on that group:

> Today there is a greater awareness of disability rights to vote and participate in the wider national decision making. However, based on my experience in last year's election when people with disability arrives at the registration booths, somehow, they cannot access the correct information and get sufficient help to ensure they are registered. (FGD 001, PwD, F)

> In the last election although I was an election observer there were several blind voters who needed interpretation because there was no braille. It is against the law to be an observer and also help people to vote. But in my case, I have to do it because there are only about 4 interpreters in country who can help with elections. 4 people are not enough to go around the whole disability populations. Today, people who are deaf and blind are aware of their right to vote so they would like to participate but then again, it comes down to how much access the government wants to give to people with disability. (FGD 001, PwD, F)

Some improvements in inclusion were noted, including an increase in the number of polling stations, polling stations opening earlier making it easier for women to vote, and

the involvement of people with disabilities and women in election observer teams and electoral officer teams. However, several participants noted that inclusion tends to be worse in rural areas compared to urban areas, and one participant in the FGD with people with disabilities (PwDs) expressed a dissenting view on the change in accessibility:

> Challenges in 2024 elections increased compared with 2019 elections. The officers have assisted people with disability, but access is still an issue. As observers, we went around to polling stations we see that schools and buildings used for polling are not disability accessible. Wheelchair cannot access the polling station. (FGD001, PwD, F)

Several participants called for special allowances for the registration and voting for people with disabilities, pregnant women and elderly people, such as a second voting day for people with additional needs, polling officers coming to people's homes or mobile voting.

This mixed perception of accessibility is backed up by other evidence, as Wiltshire et al. (2024) found that for the 2024 elections, only 62% of polling stations were considered "good" or "very good", while one third of polling stations were observed to be inaccessible for PwDs. Baker and Kelly (2025) also observed that inclusion had been considered in some aspects of election design, however not always followed through in practice. They give an example of a polling station which had access ramps, but where the electoral list had been printed in small text and hung high on a wall where a voter in a wheelchair was unable to read it. Nonetheless, it was also found that assistance to voters was very common and rarely coercive (Wiltshire et al. 2024).



Voters check the list of electors at a polling station in Honiara, 17 April 2024
Source: Mick Tsikas, AAP Image via AP

4.2 Voter engagement with political processes

Voter Engagement – Key Findings

- Survey findings support official research that eligible voter participation in registration and voting processes is high in Solomon Islands.
- KII and FGD data suggests reasons for high voter turnout beyond political engagement, including fear, community obligations and promises of rewards through CDFs.
- Women were less likely to have actually voted than men in the 2024 Joint Elections. Reasons varied, with common responses including illness/pregnancy, being too busy, and not being able to travel to the voting place.
- Nearly three quarters of voters report that they voted according to their personal preference in the 2024 elections, and a similar number were aware that other people are not allowed to pressure you into voting as they wish. Those who could not vote based on their own preference reported that they were pressured to vote by parents, community leaders, spouses or church leaders.
- Women and young people reported that they are less likely to be able to vote according to their own preference. Female voters also believe that other adult women are less likely than men to be able to vote autonomously.
- Eligible voters found it useful to seek advice from others about their votes, particularly from their parents, political candidates and their spouses.
- While nearly 75% of eligible voters felt that they were able to vote according to their own preference, far fewer voters believe that other population groups can vote according to their own preference. There was particularly low confidence in the voting autonomy of adult women and young women. However, the lowest responses were for people with a disability, with less than 20% of voters believing that people with a disability can vote by personal preference.
- While a majority of eligible voters are aware that candidates are not allowed to find out who voted for them, over 50% still report that candidates do find out, most commonly from voters informing them directly, or from them hearing about it from other members of the community. This practice is supported by common practices of gift giving (including through CDFs) in exchange for people's votes.
- While over half of eligible voters would be willing to vote for a female candidate, very few have actually voted for a woman in the past, with the main reasons for not voting for female candidates being a lack of opportunity (no female candidates) and a belief that they would not be able to win. When asked what it would take for them to vote for a female candidate, the most common response is for that woman to be better educated.
- There is no significant difference between the willingness and the experience of male and female voters in voting for a female candidate. However, older voters are more likely to have voted for a woman (likely due to their additional years of voting experience) and people with a disability are more willing to vote for a woman.
- There are a growing number of regular internet users in Solomon Islands, and over 50% believe that social media can influence people's decisions about how to vote. However, very few people report that they have ever posted about elections on social media, with those who have mostly posting about social issues, or in support of particular candidates.
- Almost 60% of eligible voters report that some sort of election awareness group visited their community in 2024, with three quarters of these indicating that it was a group from SIEC.

HOW SOLOMON ISLANDERS ENGAGE IN ELECTIONS



Voter turnout is **high** in Solomon Islands



WOMEN ARE LESS LIKELY TO HAVE VOTED

Compared to men in the 2024 elections

TURNOUR VARIES GEOGRAPHICALLY

- ▲ Higher than in Honiara
- ▼ Lower than in Honiara
- ● No signficiant difference to Honiara

Province	Registered	Voted
Guadalcanal	●	●
Malaita	▲	●
Western	▲	▲
Isabel	▼	▲
Central	▲	▲

But **high voter turnout** may **not** mean high political engagement

REASONS WHY PEOPLE MAY VOTE

Insights from interviews and focus group discussions



Social pressure

Fear and intimidation may pressure people to vote



Community obligations

Community and kinship ties may influence people to vote



Access to resources

Constituency funds may incentivise people to vote

Voter participation in the 2024 Joint Elections

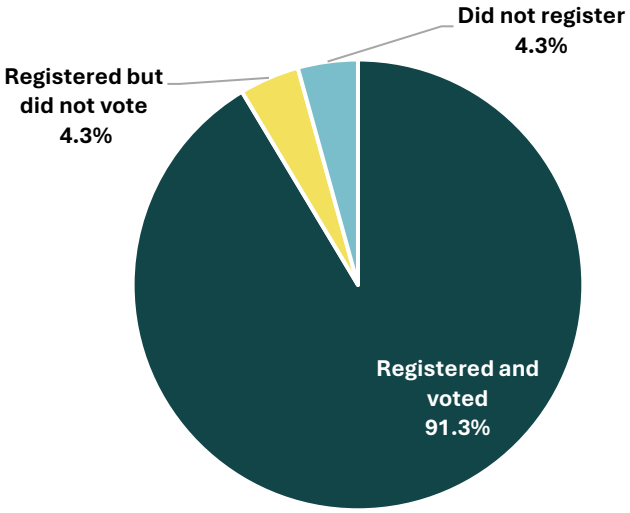


Figure 13: Participation in the 2024 Joint Elections (population-weighted estimates)

Voter turnout tends to be high in Solomon Islands, and this was reflected in the survey where 91.3% of eligible voters can be assumed to have registered and voted in the sample provinces (Figure 13). This compares favourably with other countries in the region, such as Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, and is also higher than the global average, which is 64% based on each country's most recent elections (International IDEA 2026).

Previous research shows that voter participation is strong across demographic groups and geography, though there are some variations. Rural communities tend to achieve slightly higher enrolment and turnout than urban areas. In a survey reflecting on the 2014 election, for instance, respondents in rural constituencies had about 95% of eligible residents registered and 92% voter turnout, compared to around 90% registration and 82% turnout among respondents in urban Honiara (Sustineo 2015). This pattern was replicated in official data for the 2019 election, which recorded some of the lowest turnouts in the capital (75% in Central Honiara) and much higher rates (over 85%) in several rural constituencies (Maharjan 2019). This is consistent with the current survey. Statistical tests (see **Annex E**) indicate that, compared to Honiara, the probability of being registered to vote is significantly higher in Malaita, Western, and Central provinces. Actual voting is more likely in Western, Isabel, and Central provinces relative to Honiara. Additionally, women were significantly less likely to have actually voted than men, with common reasons including illness/pregnancy, being too busy, and not being able to travel to the voting place.

Key informants agreed that there is high turnout for elections, but most noted that this is not necessarily an indicator of high levels of political engagement or interest in democratic outcomes. Key informants suggested a range of factors that contribute to the high turnout.

- **People vote because they are afraid:**

  They're engaged in the election – let's not mistake it with political [engagement].... I don't think that you should see what voter turnout [is] and make this deduction that it's because they are politically engaged. No, they are not.... They're frightened, so they go to vote. (KII 001, F)

- **People vote because of cultural/community obligations**:

  We have high interest in voting, ... but low engagement in understanding the policies or the politics.... Most people focus mainly on candidate, personality... kinship ties, it's more into cultural, yeah, community obligations rather than political, political platforms. (KII 002, F)

- **People vote because of CDFs**:

  The Constituency Development Fund plays a vital role in moving people to come and participate in the electoral process.... you have to be on the roll in order for you to access that Member of Parliament... I don't say it's the 90% why people do that, but what I'm saying is it has an influence on how people want to come and participate in our process. It would be a different result if there is no Constituency Development Fund. (KII 003, M)

One key informant, from the SIEC, suggested that some voters are motivated by genuine engagement:

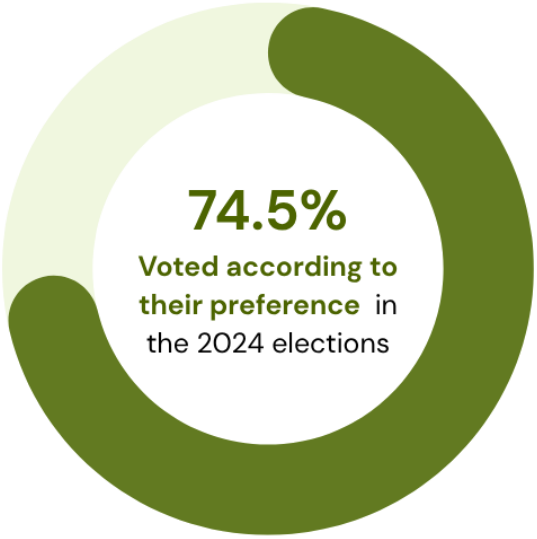
> There are certain category level of people who wants to come and exercise the democratic right. That I cannot put into percentage how much, but there are people who believe in the process who believe that they can do that in election. (KII 003, M)



A woman casting her vote on the island of San Cristobal, 17 April 2024
Source: Charley Piringi, AP Photo

WHO INFLUENCE VOTERS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS?





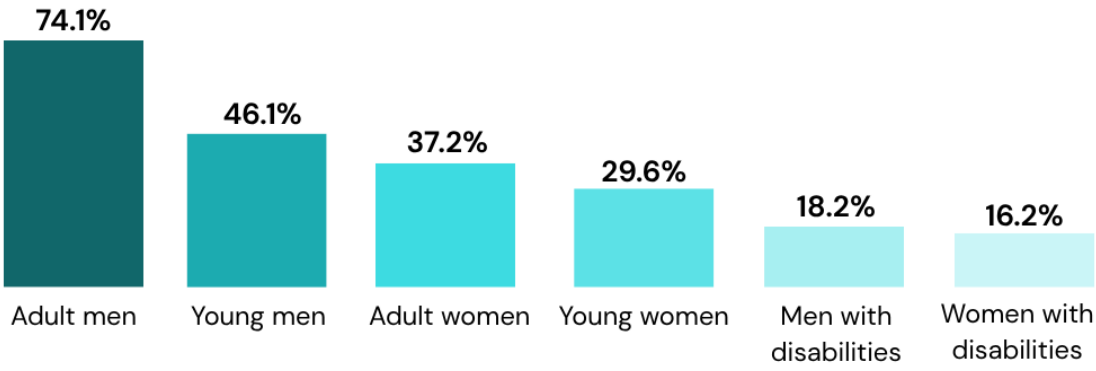
VOTING AUTONOMY IS NOT EQUAL



to say they voted according to their own preferences

PERCEIVED VOTING AUTONOMY ACROSS DIFFERENT GROUPS

Share of eligible voters who believe each group can vote autonomously



VALUED ADVICE SOURCE

Share of eligible voters citing each advice source as influential in their voting decisions



19.1%
Parents



11.2%
Candidates



10.7%
Spouses



8.3%
Community leaders

Deciding who to vote for

Voting behaviour and autonomy

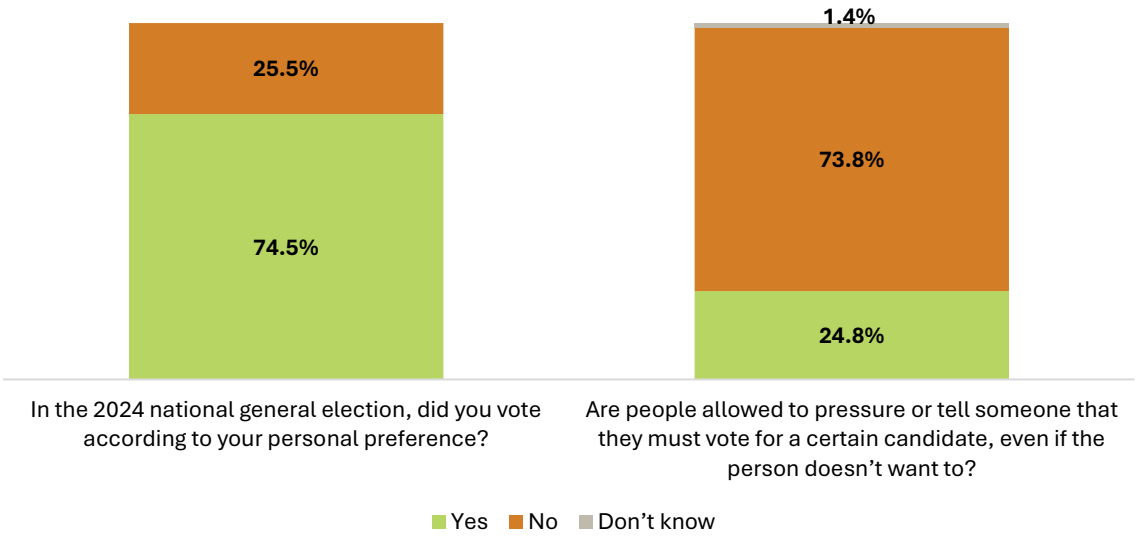


Figure 14: Self-reported voting autonomy and perceived acceptability of pressuring voters (population-weighted estimates)

Most surveyed voters (73.8%) agree that people are not allowed to pressure or tell someone that they must vote for a certain candidate (Figure 14). This indicates a strong level of awareness about voting autonomy and the principle that voting should be a personal choice. Consistent with this understanding, a majority (74.5%) of voters reported that they voted according to their personal preferences in the 2024 election, suggesting a relatively high level of voting autonomy in practice (Figure 14). This finding is slightly lower than results from the 2019 study, which can be found in **Annex D**.



Figure 15: Predicted proportion of each group who said they voted according to their own preferences in the 2024 Joint Elections

*Note: Estimates are derived from marginal effects based on regression analysis. See **Annex E** for details on model specification and interpretation.*

Notably, statistical testing (see **Annex E**) shows that women are less likely than men to report that they were able to vote according to their own preferences during the 2024 Joint Elections. Around 87.5% of male voters reported having autonomy in their voting decisions in the 2024 elections, while only 61.1% of female voters the same (Figure 15).

Compared to the youngest age group (18–25 years old), older voters are significantly more likely to report voting autonomy. Only 61.6% of voters aged 18–25 reported voting according to their own preferences, compared to 82.2% of those aged 26–40 and 85.1% of voters aged over 41 (Figure 16). There are no statistically significant differences for people with a disability.

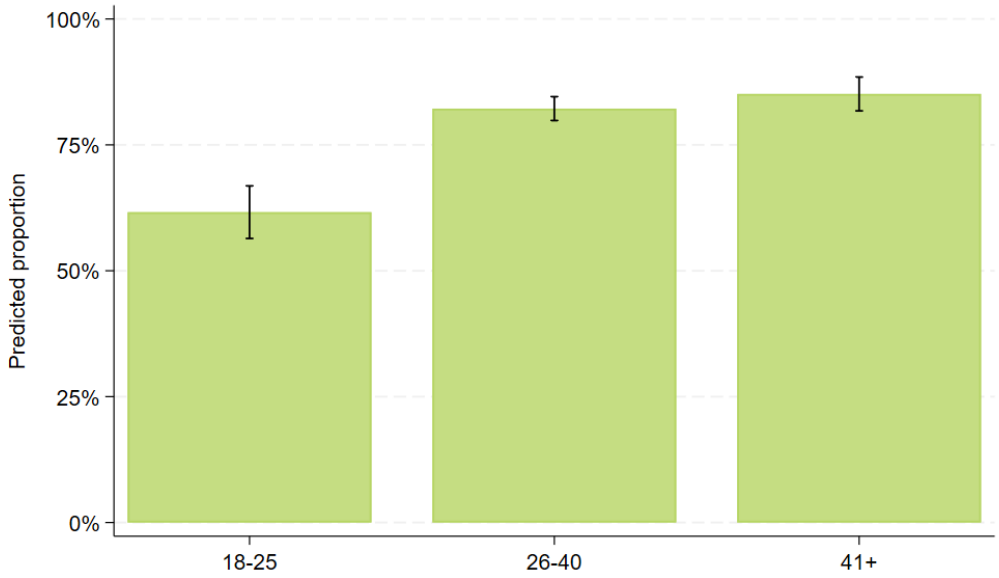


Figure 16: Predicted proportion of each group who said they voted according to their own preferences in the 2024 Joint Elections
*Note: Estimates are derived from marginal effects based on regression analysis. See **Annex E** for details on model specification and interpretation.*

Among voters who reported that they did not vote according to their own preferences in the 2024 elections, the most cited reasons were influence from parents, community leaders, and close family members, including spouses (

Table 4). As noted above, some FGD and KII respondents suggested that they only voted due to a sense of obligation to community and cultural leaders. Similar people were identified when respondents were asked whose advice they value most when deciding which candidate to vote for (apart from their own judgement), with many identifying close family members (such as parents and spouses), as well as influential community figures, including candidates and community leaders (Figure 17). This is consistent to findings in the 2019 study which also highlights the influence of advice from parents, spouses, and community leaders (Sustineo 2019). Broadly, this suggests that while awareness of voting autonomy is generally high, family and community relationships may still shape voting decisions, both through advice and potentially coercion.

Table 4: Reasons why voters did not vote according to their personal preference (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Choice	Percentage of respondents mentioned	Confidence Interval	
		Lower (%)	Upper (%)
My parents told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	11.1	9.5	12.8
Community leaders told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	8.7	5.2	12.1
My husband / wife told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	6.7	5.4	8
Church leaders told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	4.5	1.9	7.1
My vote was not secret – the candidate or campaign manager could find out who I voted for	2.5	0.6	4.5
Other extended family (uncles / aunts / cousins) told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	2.4	1.6	3.2
Tribal leaders told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	2.3	0.5	4.2
Other immediate family (brothers / sisters) told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	2.1	1.3	2.8
I promised my vote to a candidate and could not break my promise	1.3	0.7	1.9
Business people told me how to vote. I couldn't go against their wishes.	0.9	0	2
Other	0.2	0	0.5

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed.

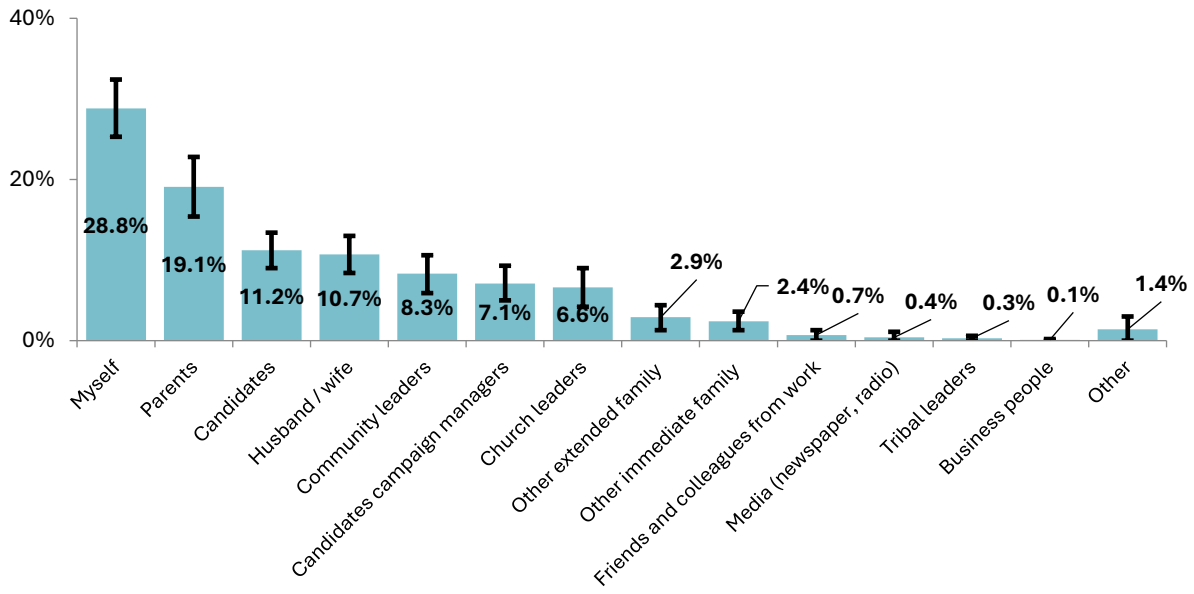


Figure 17: Advice sources that voters value the most when deciding who to vote for (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

While 74.5% of voters felt that they voted according to their own preference (Figure 14), they have much more negative perceptions of whether particular social groups are able to vote accordingly (Figure 18). Voters perceived adult men as most able to vote freely (74.1%), followed by young men (46.1%), adult women (37.2%), and young women (29.6%). This suggests that voters are very concerned about certain demographics, particularly women and young people, not having the chance to determine their own vote.

Not only are women *less likely* than men to believe they can vote according to their own preferences, they are also *less likely* to believe that adult women in their communities are generally able to vote according to their preference. Only 34.4% of eligible female voters believe that adult women in their communities are able to vote according to their own preferences, compared to 45.1% of eligible male voters (Figure 19).

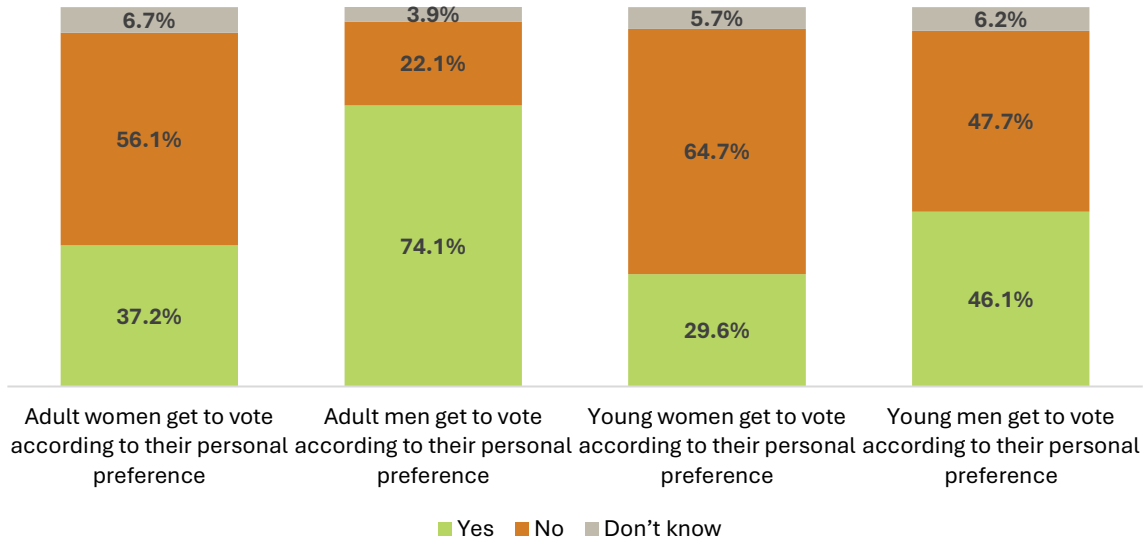


Figure 18: Awareness of voting autonomy in the constituency (population-weighted estimate)

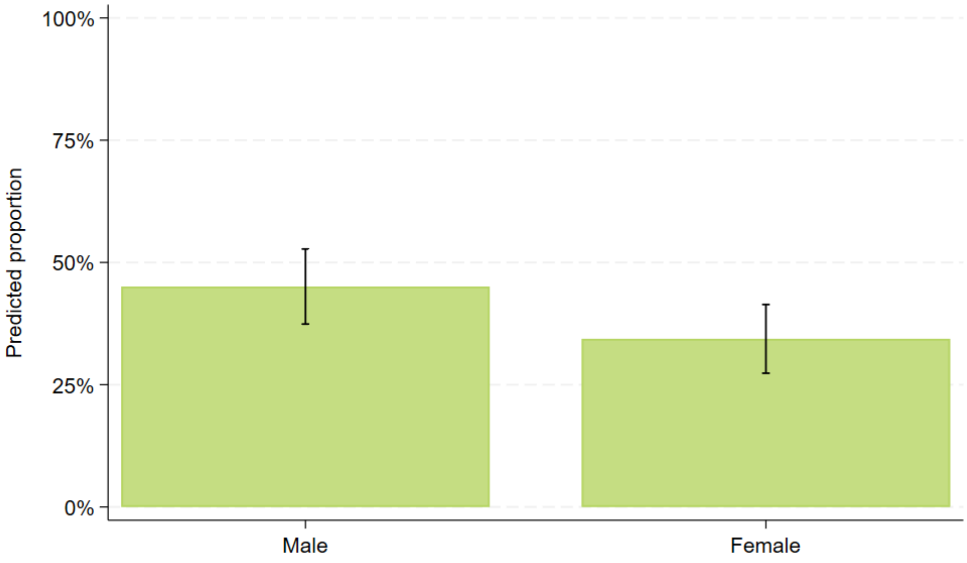


Figure 19: Predicted proportion of each group who said believe adult women in their communities get to vote according to their own preferences

*Note: Estimates are derived from marginal effects based on regression analysis. See **Annex E** for details on model specification and interpretation.*

The perceived autonomy of people with disabilities was even lower than for women and young people, with only 16.2% of voters assuming that women with a disability and 18.2% assuming that men with a disability have voter autonomy (Figure 20).

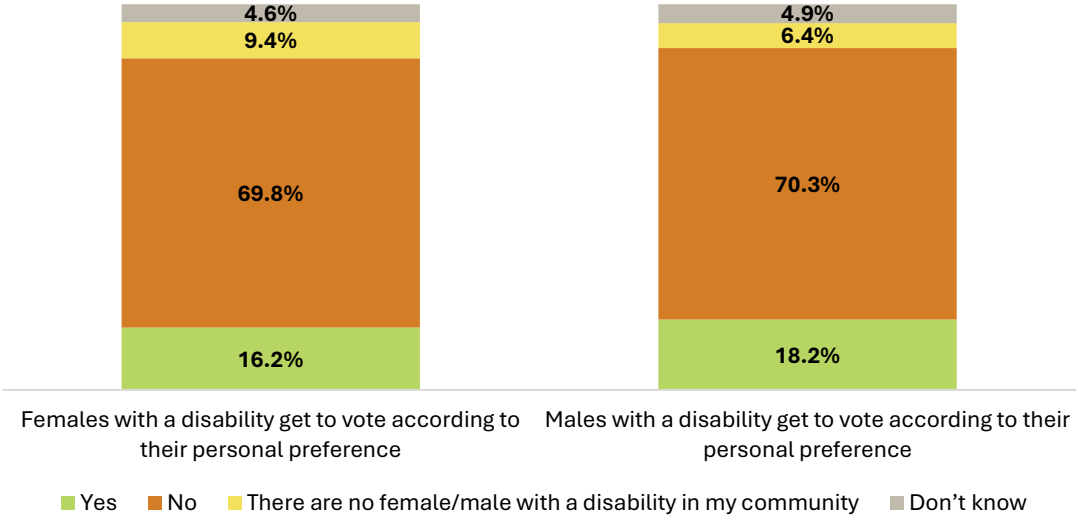


Figure 20: Awareness of voting autonomy among voters with disabilities in the constituency (population-weighted)

This pattern differs only slightly from the findings of the 2019 study on Women's Leadership and Political Participation (presented in **Annex D**), which reported that most respondents believed that none of the groups asked about – including adult men – were able to vote autonomously (Sustineo 2019).

Broadly, these survey findings suggest that, despite relatively high reported personal autonomy, perceived inequalities in voting autonomy persist across gender, age, and disability status. Several KII and FGD participants also identified problems with the autonomy of women and youth voters in electoral processes, noting that the votes of women and youth are often influenced or forced:

> Sometimes because we are young and we are female we are left out of benefits, [and] electoral cycles …awareness, we do our housework and gardening as priority not election awareness. We are not able to ask questions about decisions because we are in a culture that we are not allowed to ask questions. (FGD 009, youth F)

However, participants also noted that they want to be able to exercise that autonomy:

> We want to cast our ballot; it is our choice to choose someone who can represent us in parliament (FGD 001, PwD, F)

Voter secrecy

While most eligible voters (67.7%) correctly understand that candidates are not permitted to find out who voted for them after the election, a majority (54%) believe that this nevertheless occurs in practice (Figure 21). When asked how candidates might find out this information, the three most cited explanations were: supporters or voters directly telling the candidate, people talking in the community, and reports from candidates' representatives in the village (Figure 22). This highlights a gap between formal electoral rules and perceptions of how elections operate in practice, particularly in close-knit community contexts. It may also suggest that the norm of voter secrecy is not strongly established, with some voters voluntarily disclosing their choices to candidates or others in the community, often in order to access support from the winning MP (Wiltshire et al. 2024).

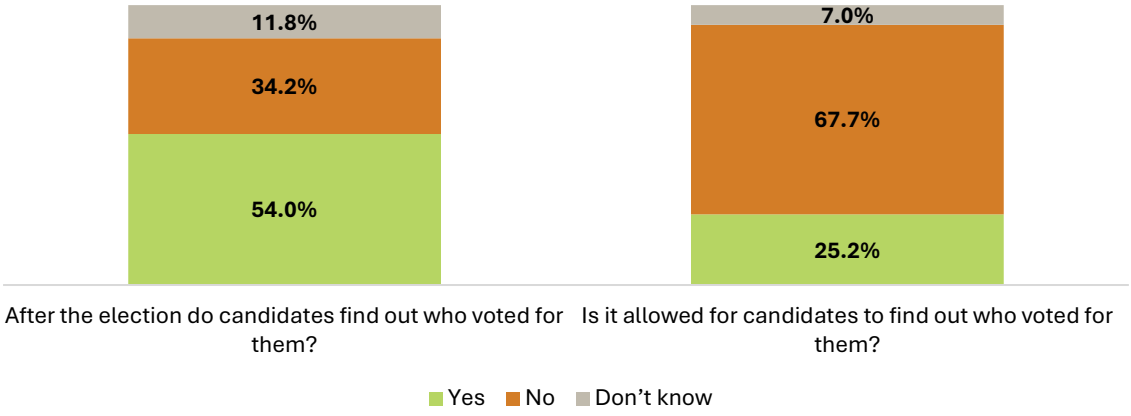


Figure 21: Perception on whether candidates find out the results (population-weighted estimates)

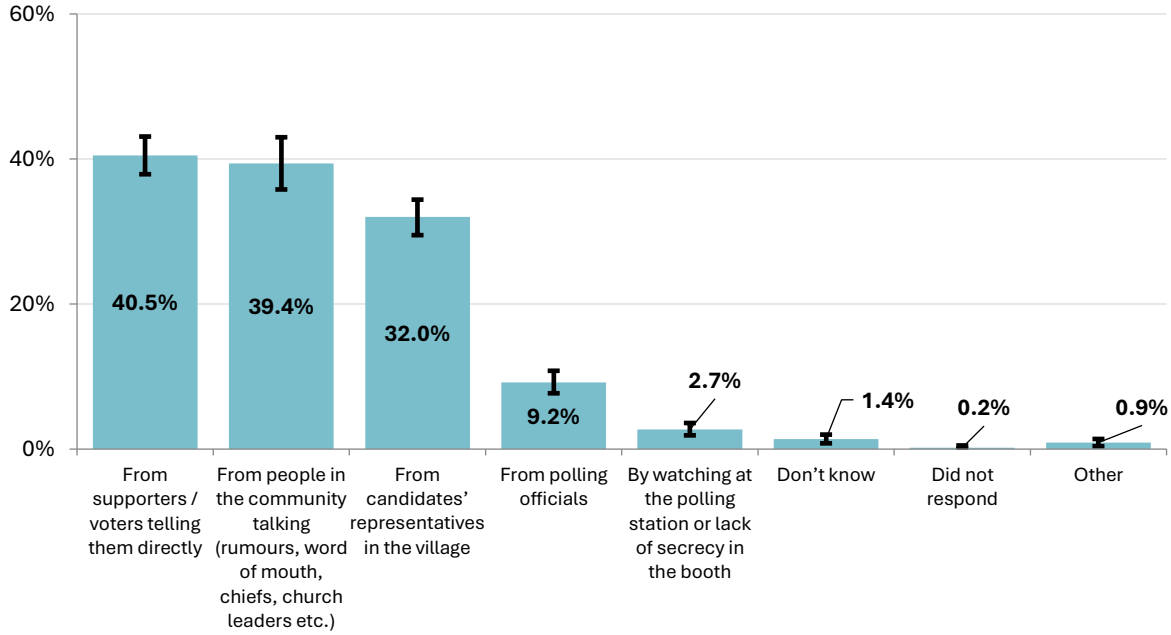


Figure 22: Perception on how candidates could find out the results after elections (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was asked only of respondents who believed candidates could find out who voted for them after the election,

As noted in Figure 3, there is a degree of concern about vote buying affecting the integrity of electoral processes. One common form of this may be through the CDFs explored in **Box 4**. Figure 23 mirrors this concern, with 56.6% of voters indicating that candidates gave gifts to people in their area in exchange for their vote. A vast majority of people are aware that this practice is not allowed.

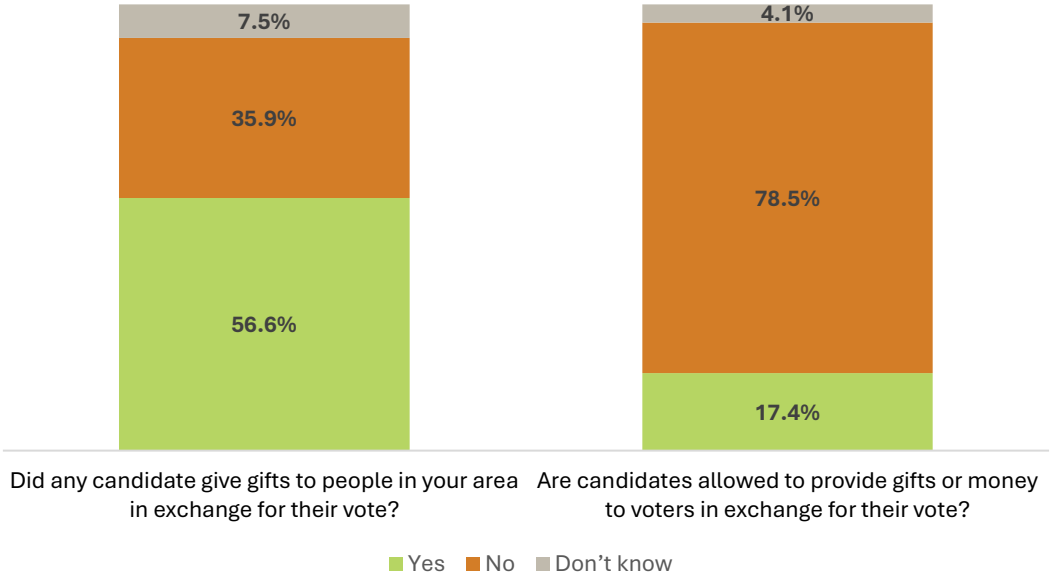


Figure 23: Awareness on gift giving during elections (population-weighted)



Vote sorting and counting, Solomon Islands Election
Source: Saeed Khan via Getty Images

WOMEN IN SOLOMON ISLANDS POLITICS

Eligible voters and their attitudes towards **voting for female candidates**

WOULD VOTE
FOR A FEMALE CANDIDATE
59.6%

HAVE VOTED
FOR A FEMALE CANDIDATE
16.6%



3
WOMEN MPs ELECTED in 2024 Elections

VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES

Are **more** likely to say they **would vote** for a female candidate

NO GENDER DIFFERENCES

In **attitudes** or **behaviours** toward female candidates (willingness to vote and actual voting).

WHY VOTERS DON'T CHOOSE FEMALE CANDIDATES

Share of eligible voters who have **NEVER** voted for a female candidate, citing each reason

51.3%
No women stand in my constituency

19.7%
Female candidates are not likely to win

7.3%
Men's campaign teams are better

Female candidates

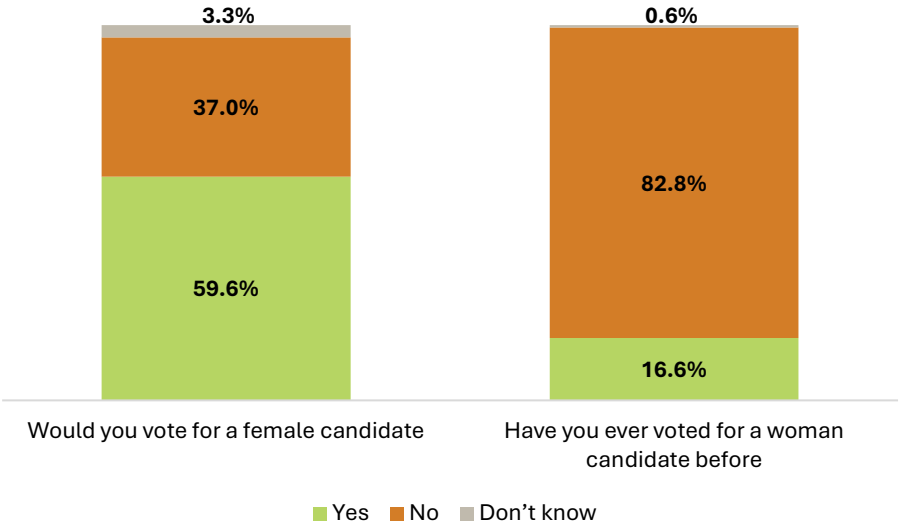


Figure 24: Willingness to vote for a female candidate and whether they have previously voted for a women candidate (population-weighted)

While over half of eligible voters (59.6%) say they are open to voting for a female candidate, the large majority (82.8%) report that they have never done so (Figure 24). Previous responses to this question can be seen in **Annex D**. The broad willingness to vote for women is supported by other research, such as a survey on public perceptions of women as political leaders in Solomon Islands in 2019, which found significant support for more women in politics, from both men and women, with 88% of respondents saying that there should be more women in national parliament (WRAM and IWDA 2019).

There are no significant differences between men and women in either their attitude (whether they would vote for a female candidate) or their practice (whether they have voted for a female candidate) (see **Annex E**). Compared to the youngest age group (18–25 years old), older voters are more likely to have voted for a woman, theoretically explained because they have participated in more elections and therefore have had a higher chance of encountering a female candidate. There are no age differences in reported willingness to vote for a woman. People with a disability are more likely to say they would vote for a woman, but there are no statistically significant differences in their actual voting behaviour.

The most cited reason that voters have not previous voted for a woman is that no woman has stood as a candidate in their constituency (Table 5). Indeed, in the 2024 election, there were 20 female candidates out of the total field of 344; 6 of these women ran as independents, while the remaining 14 were included in the 13 parties contesting the election (Baker 2024). This points to potential barriers facing female candidates prior to the election itself, rather than constraints arising only during the voting process. Other frequently mentioned reasons reflect prevailing gender norms, including "women candidates are not likely to win" or "men's campaign teams are better".

When asked what would make them more likely to vote for a female candidate, respondents emphasised the importance of credentials and demonstrated capability –

for example, being better educated, having a track record of helping the community, or possessing strong communication skills (

Table 6). Previous research suggests that voters generally believe that women do have these capabilities, including findings from a 2015 survey, in which 81% of respondents agreed that women are just as skilled as men in politics (Sustineo 2015).

Ultimately, 3 women were elected to parliament in the 2024 elections – the most in a single election to date (Wiltshire et al. 2024). At the time the research was carried out, there were 4 women in parliament, with Mary Garu winning in West Guadalcanal by-election in June 2025, replacing her husband who died in office earlier that year (Toito'ona 2025). Together, these findings suggest that while openness to female and more diverse leadership exists, structural barriers and gendered perceptions of capability continue to shape electoral outcomes.

Table 5: Reasons why respondents have never voted for a female candidate (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Choice	Percentage of respondents mentioned	Confidence Interval	
		Lower (%)	Upper (%)
No women stand in my constituency	51.3	48.7	54
Women candidates are not likely to win	19.5	17.1	21.9
Men's campaign teams are better	7.3	5.7	8.9
Women don't have the support of community leaders	6	4.6	7.4
Cultural / gender norms favour men as leaders	4.1	3	5.1
Don't see female candidates in communities during the campaign	3.8	2.8	4.8
Women don't have the support of tribal leaders	3.7	2.5	4.8
Men usually have a better reputation for helping their community from the time before they decided to stand as a candidate.	3.6	2.6	4.6
Women don't have the support of business	1.2	0.5	1.8
Women don't have enough money to spend to their supporters	1.1	0.5	1.7
Women candidates are not qualified / not capable	1	0.5	1.5
Women don't have the support of church leaders	0.9	0.4	1.5
Women haven't given me food, money or gifts	0.5	0.1	1
Never see female posters, pamphlets, banners and campaign material from female candidates	0.5	0.1	1
Other	6.7	5.4	8.1

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed.

Table 6: What would it take for respondents to vote for a women candidate (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Choice	Percentage of respondents mentioned	Confidence Interval	
		Lower (%)	Upper (%)
Be better educated	45.2	42.6	47.8
Have helped people in my community in the past	25.3	23	27.6
Have better communication skills	24	21.8	26.3
Have the support of the influential people within my community	20.4	17.9	22.8
Have better profession credentials	19.6	17.6	21.7
To be seen in my community	15	13.1	16.9
To live in the constituency before the election rather than in another place	14.8	12.6	16.9
Have the support of the church leader	9.1	7.4	10.8
Give me food, money or gifts	7.9	6.3	9.5
I will never vote for a women candidate	7.8	6.2	9.4
Have the support of the tribal leader	7.2	5.6	8.8
Have more vocal supporters to tell others why she will win	3.7	2.7	4.7
Have the support of business	2.2	1.3	3.1
Have more campaign material like posters, pamphlets and banners	1.1	0.6	1.7
Other	5.1	4	6.3

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed.

MEDIA AND POLITICS IN SOLOMON ISLANDS



55.8%
of eligible voters are Internet users

54.6%
of eligible voters think social media can influence voting decisions

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

6.3% of Internet users posted about politics on social media

4.5% of Internet users posted about the 2024 elections on social media

COMMON TOPIC ABOUT 2024 ELECTIONS TO POST

Share of users who **posted** about 2024 elections on social media

An issue I care about **31.9%**

Messages supporting a candidate **26.2%**

INSIGHTS FROM INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS

> *"... a lof of **misinformation** will be spread through social media as part of, you know, election campaigns."*

> *"Social media makes it **easier** for youths to access information."*

Awareness and media

Social media engagement

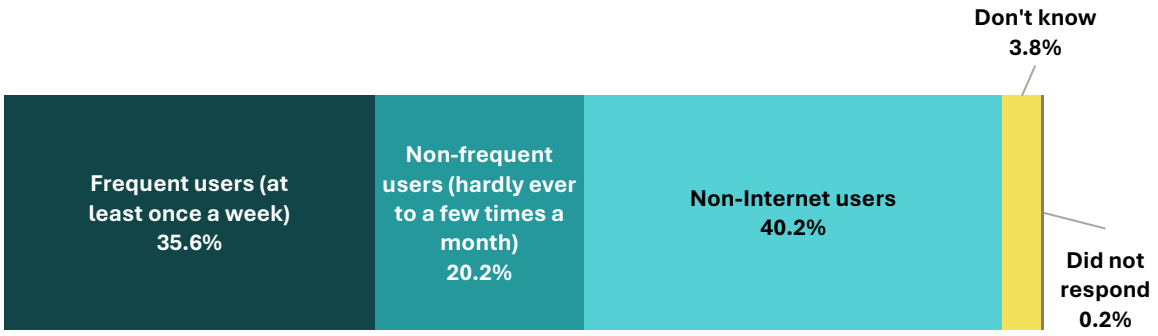


Figure 25: Frequency of internet usage (population-weighted)

Internet access and usage have changed in Solomon Islands in recent years. This survey found that over half of voters are now internet users of varying frequency (Figure 25). This is a clear increase from the 2015 survey, which found that only 9% of respondents access the internet, and the 18.4% of respondents who reported having internet access in 2020 (Sustineo 2015; Sustineo 2020).

With this increasing internet use, a small majority of 54.6% of voters feel that social media can influence people's voting decisions (Figure 26), however, very few voters (less than 10%) report that they ever post anything about politics or government on social media (Figure 27). In the 2020 survey, 12.4% of respondents said they had posted about political issues on social media (Sustineo 2020). Those who did post online during the 2024 election reported that they were more likely to have made positive posts about the issues or candidates they support, rather than negative posts criticising candidates, policies or electoral processes (Figure 28).

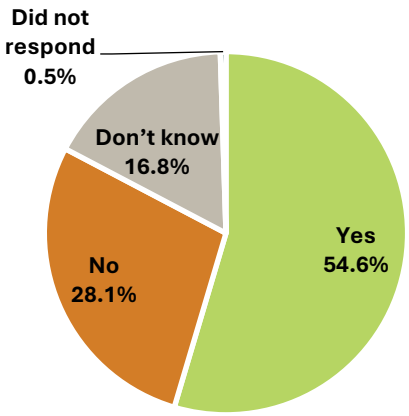


Figure 26: View on whether social media can influence peoples' decisions in how they vote (population-weighted estimate)

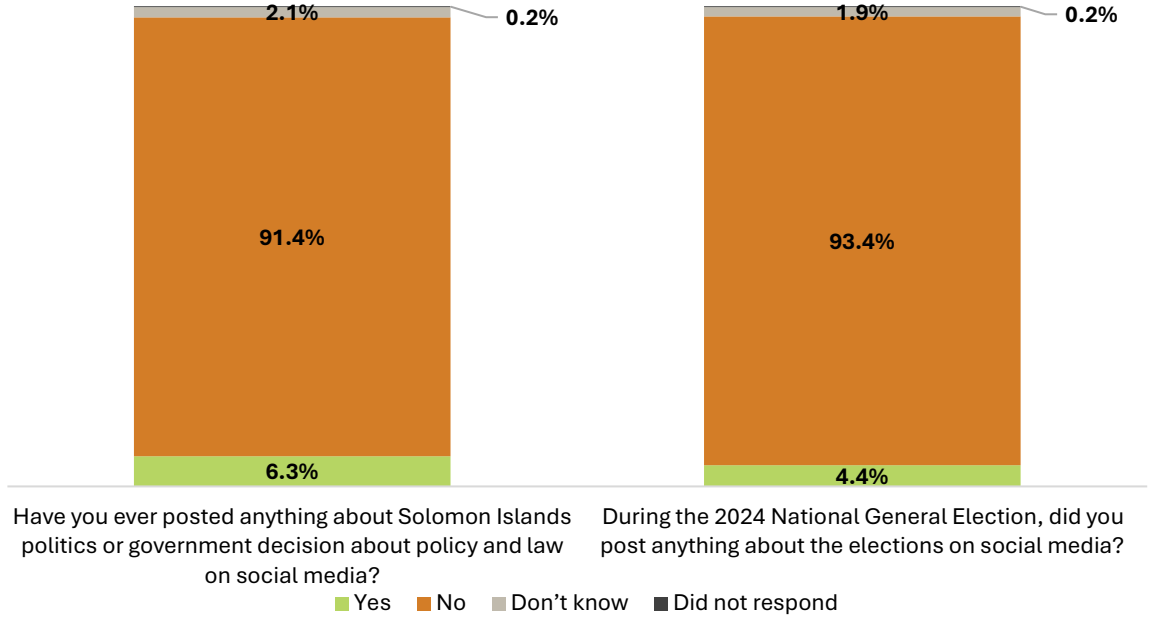


Figure 27: Social media presence among Internet users (population-weighted estimate)

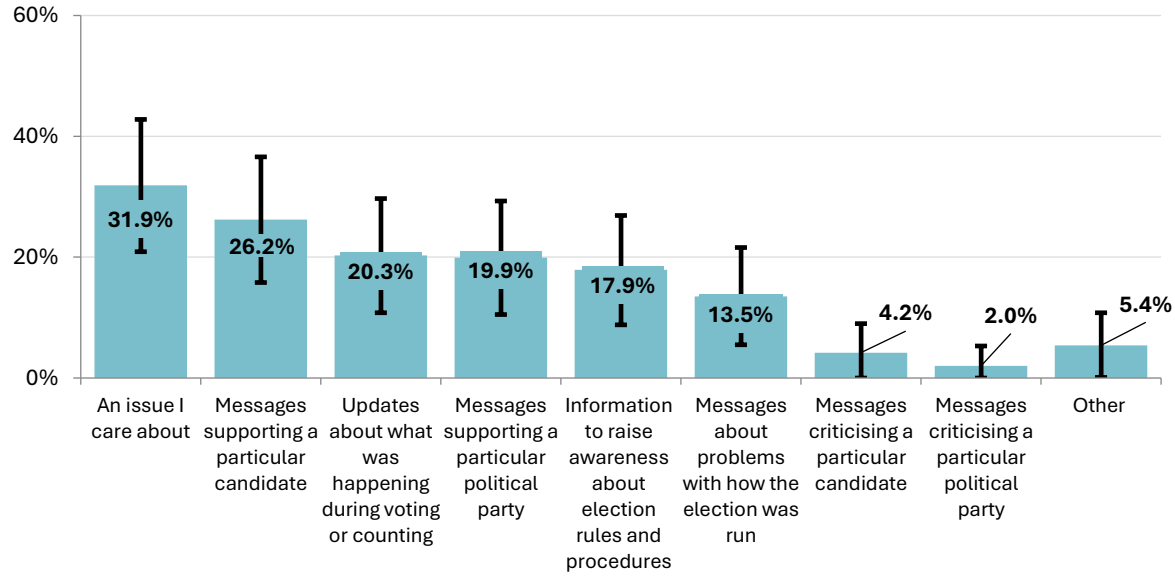


Figure 28: Topics respondents posted about related to the 2024 election (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed.

Election-related media was explored in a little more detail in KIIs and FGDs and was broadly described as having two main roles: to educate voters and to keep people informed about elections. Traditional media was described by key informants as more trustworthy than social media, but they acknowledged it can be expensive to operate and does not always reach remote areas and younger audiences.

Views about social media were not consistent. Key informants typically described social media as being prone to misinformation and emphasised the role of traditional media in identifying and correcting misinformation.

> We all know social media is open to abuse, a lot of disinformation, a lot of misinformation will be spread through social media as part of, you know, election campaigns. So I think that would be an added role for those of us who are working in the

> media to make sure that the level and the kind of information that we send out to the public are accurate. We should be making sure that any misinformation, any disinformation or any, you know, information that's that is simply outright liars should be exposed in the media by the mainstream media. (KII 005, M)

In general, FGD participants presented a more balanced view. Participants noted that misinformation and bias is a problem for all media (traditional and social), and acknowledged that social media does offer some advantages for accessibility of information for youth and people in rural areas.

> Social media makes it easier for youths to access information. (FGD 012, F youth)

It was also noted that online media is becoming more available due to the prevalence of mobile phones and Starlink in Solomon Islands, and that some traditional media sources are beginning to share information online (e.g. Solomon Islands Broadcasting Company and Tavuli News).



A man voting in the Solomon Islands election
Source: Adam Kennedy, ABC News

Awareness campaigns

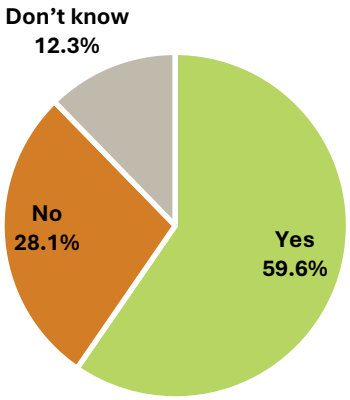


Figure 29: Knowledge of whether any awareness group visited their community in 2024 about the election (population-weighted estimate)

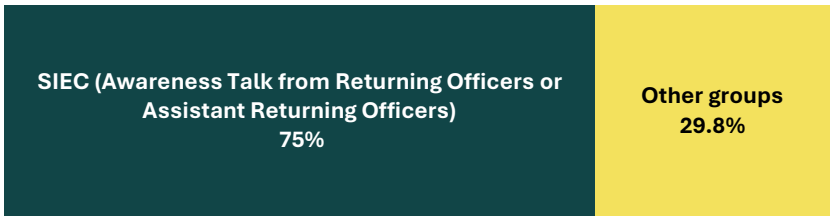


Figure 30: Type of awareness group that visited communities in 2024 about the election (population-weighted estimates)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was only asked of respondents who indicated an awareness group visited their community in 2024 about the election.

The survey also explored whether voters had experience of electoral awareness groups visiting their communities to run education programs relating to the election. A majority of voters were aware of these groups visiting (Figure 29), with three quarters of these people identifying that it was a SIEC awareness program that came to their community (Figure 30). This is counterintuitive, given that very few voters were able to correctly identify SIEC (Figure 4), but perhaps just indicates that the survey question led them to this response if they were aware that awareness programs were run by a government body.

4.3 Voter satisfaction with political actors

Voter Satisfaction – Key Findings

- Eligible voters think MPs should focus more on governing the country and on getting better conditions for all people in the constituency, and less on assisting those who voted for them.
- Nearly 10% of eligible voters report that they don't know what their MPs do, or believe that they do nothing.
- Over 50% of eligible voters are dissatisfied with their National and Provincial / City Council representations. Satisfaction with National MPs is slightly higher than with Provincial / City Council members.
- Satisfaction with both levels of representatives is lower in Central, and higher in Western and Isabel provinces, compared with Honiara.
- There is general frustration with government representatives who are seen to focus most on local issues, particularly on rewarding those who have voted for them, rather than on engaging with parliament and issues at the national level. However, providing support to voters is often what determines voters' support and is what gets candidates elected.
- Trust in all listed political actors fell below 50%, with the most trusted body being the court system, and the least being the new SIICAC and the Provincial Governments / Honiara City Council.
- Eligible voters in Western and Isabel provinces tend to have a greater trust in political actors than those in Honiara, while eligible voters in Malaita have significantly lower levels of trust.
- The 43.9% of eligible voters who indicated they had low or very low trust in SIEC suggested that this was primarily because they don't hear much about their work, or because they are concerned about the influence of political leaders on SIEC and the lack of transparency and accountability in their work.

Perception of the roles of Members of Parliament

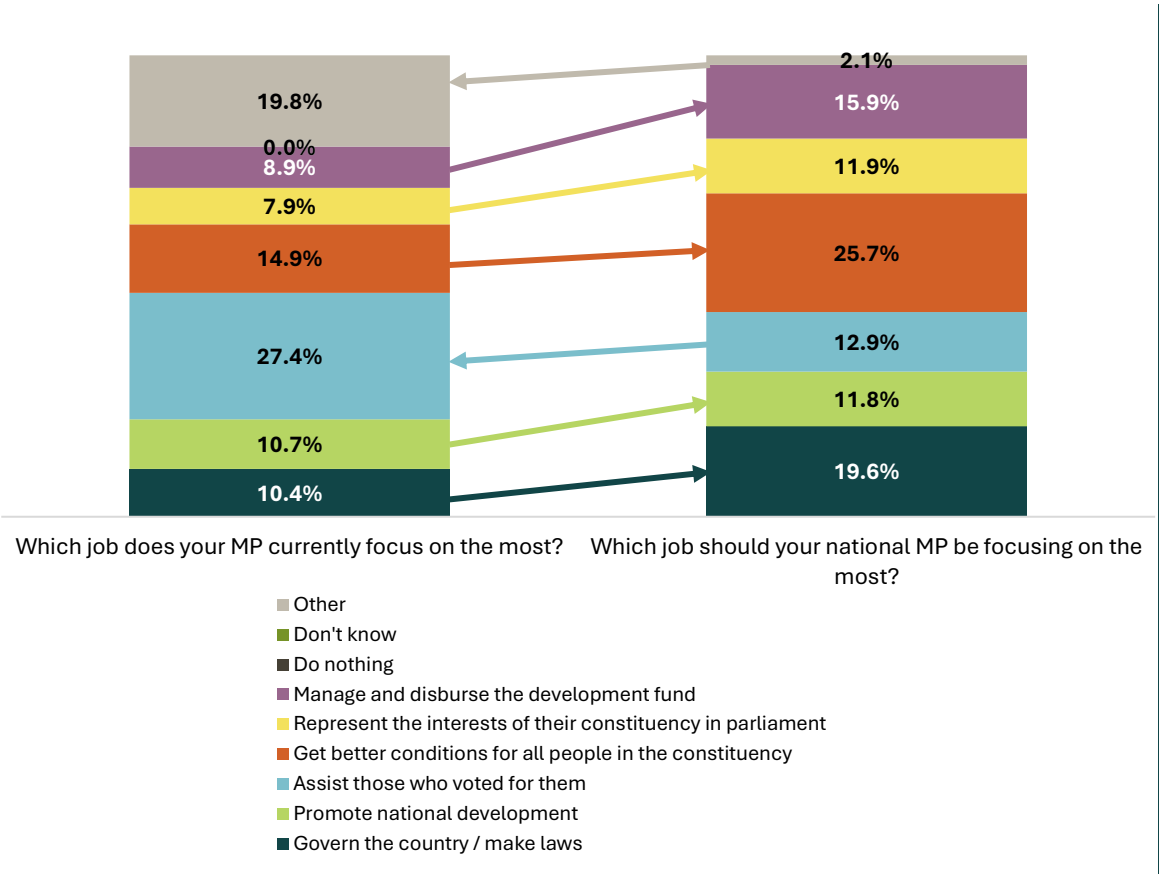


Figure 31: Respondents' perception of the roles of Members of Parliament (population weighted estimates)

The survey data highlights a gap between what people perceive MPs are currently doing and what they think MPs should be doing (Figure 31). For example, voters think that MPs should focus more on governing the country, getting better conditions for all people in their constituency, representing the interests of their constituency, and managing the development fund than they currently believe they do. Conversely, many voters think MPs should focus less on assisting those who voted for them than they do currently, which connects to the voter concern about vote buying and CDFs discussed above. Nearly 10% of respondents either don't know what their MPs do or believe that they do nothing.

In the 2020 Civic Knowledge and Citizen Engagement Study, the same question was asked with the same response options. Similarly in that study, voters felt that their MPs currently focus more on assisting those who voted for them and less on getting better conditions for all people in their constituencies than the respondents believed the MPs should (Sustineo 2020).

These results demonstrate the paradox of governance explored below, where voters want their MPs to be delivering better outcomes at the national level, but select candidates based on their ability to support constituents at the local level.

Satisfaction with MPs and Provincial/City Council members

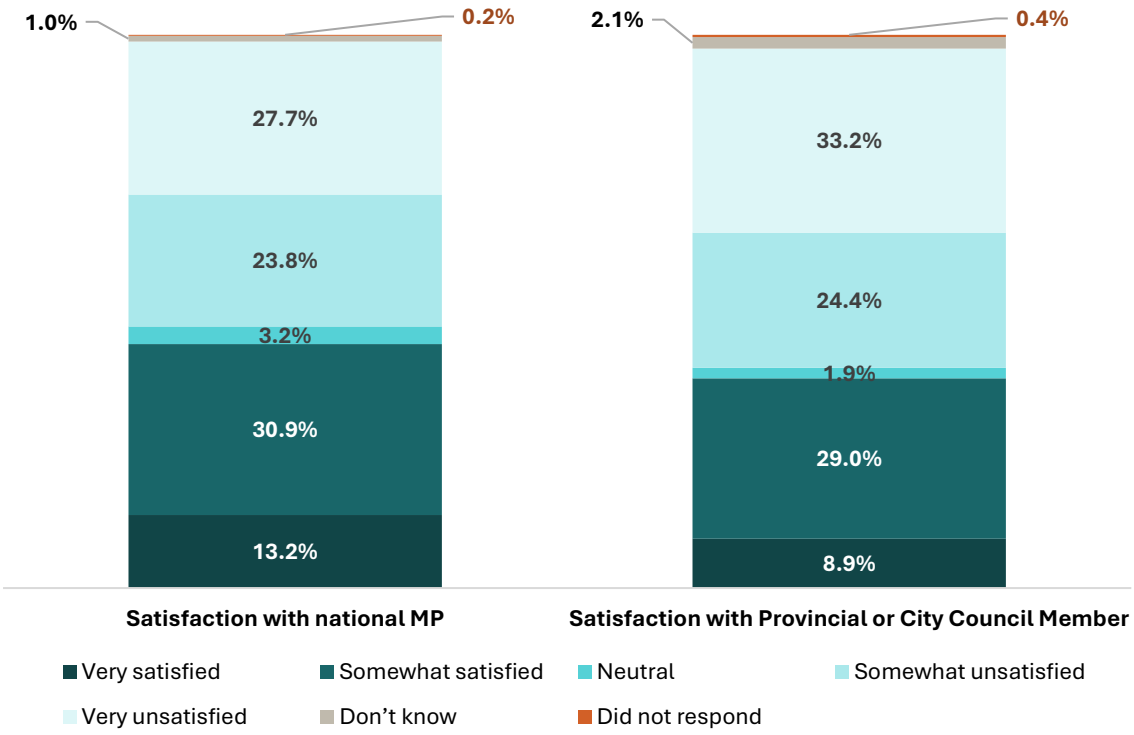


Figure 32: Satisfaction with Members of Parliaments and Provincial/City Council members (population-weighted)

The study also questioned voters on their satisfaction with National and Provincial/City representatives, finding that while 44.1% of voters are satisfied or very satisfied with their national MP and 37.9% with their Provincial/City council members, a larger percentage of respondents (over 50%) are unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with their representatives (Figure 32). Voters are particularly unsatisfied with their Provincial or City council members. Conversely, in a 2017 study (see **Annex D**), voters were more unsatisfied with their National MPs than with their provincial governments (Sustineo 2017).

There is no significant difference between men and women in their satisfaction with National MPs; however, women are more likely to report higher satisfaction with Provincial or City Council Members (see **Annex E**). While 35.3% of eligible male voters reported satisfaction[8] with their Provincial or City Council Members, almost half (47.3%) of eligible female voters are satisfied (Figure 33).

[8] This includes those to reported being "satisfied" or "highly satisfied".

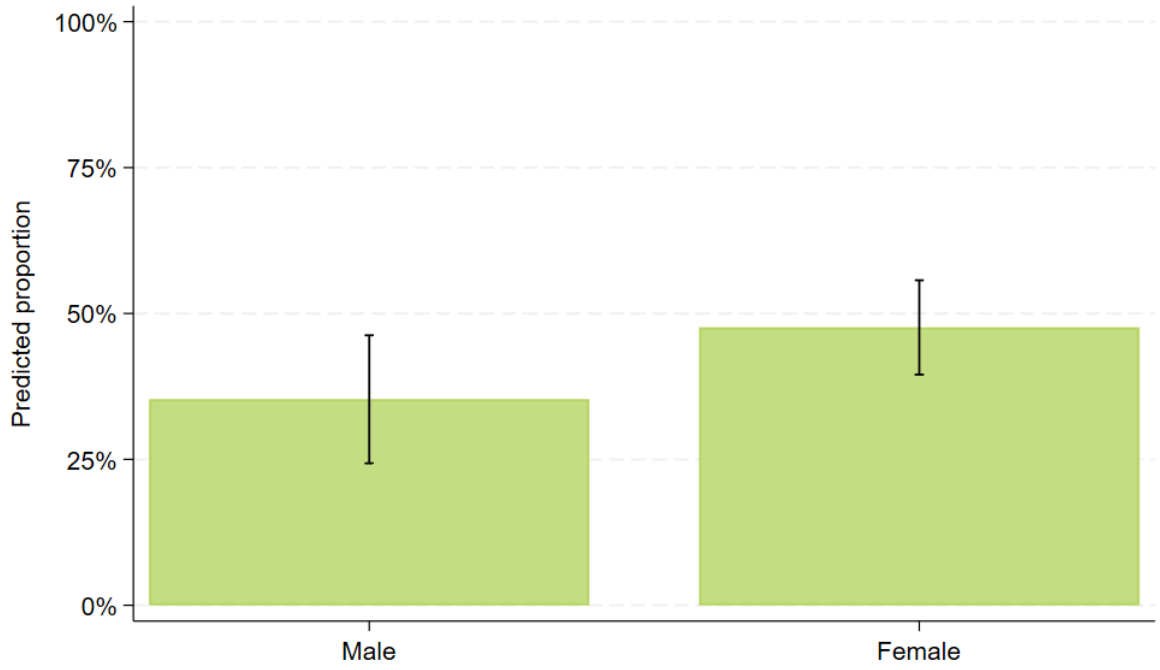


Figure 33: Predicted proportion of each group who are satisfied or highly satisfied with their Provincial or City Council Members

*Note: Estimates are derived from marginal effects based on regression analysis. See **Annex E** for details on model specification and interpretation.*

There are also geographical differences. Compared to Honiara, respondents in Western and Isabel provinces are more likely to report higher satisfaction with Provincial or City Council Members, while those from Central province are less likely to report higher satisfaction.

In KIIs and FGDs, satisfaction with politicians and political processes varied among participants, but was low overall. Unfulfilled promises from MPs were the most common point of dissatisfaction and were reported by most participants. In one FGD, a participant emphasised that leaders "campaign with lips, not heart". Others said:

> During campaign they promise many things, but after winning they turn their backs on us. (FGD 010, M)

> We are not satisfied because we do not know the contribution at Parliament. There were fake promises by our current MP…he said he will build our bridge…he said he will build a clinic…he said he will build our market. These are his promises. (FGD 003, F)

Another common complaint was corruption among politicians, and MPs seeking their own benefits.

> … one common thing that we see here in every election or after every election is elected leaders coming in and … [they] seem to amass or… access so much money. We don't know where they got those money from…. To see a politician who comes in there with nothing, and after 2-3 years, you see them driving in expensive Toyota Hilux, buying land, building houses, buying expensive stuff for their children and all that. It's so disappointing when you see those things, when Solomon Islanders, when people like us, show those things, you can tell that that's the …main intention of some people going in there in Parliament – just to enrich themselves, just to gain access to the country's wealth. (KII 005, M)

This also included frustrations that some MPs only provide support those who voted for them, excluding other people in the constituency.

The third key point of dissatisfaction, which came through particularly strongly in the KIIs, was that elected MPs often lack political awareness and do not focus on national level policy and governance.

> I am still looking for the day you know where we will see our Members... producing better laws that will help save the future of our country, our Members of Parliament debate vibrantly in Parliament, asking questions on budget, asking questions on government policies. We are yet to see that sort of thing happening in our Parliament (KII 005, M)

> ...based on my observation... by looking at new candidates who just came into Parliament last year, I would say... only few of them understand what they are there for.... They're just there, maybe because of... cultural thinking of people that puts them there. They don't know how to contribute in the discussions, or maybe from time to time, they would learn. But I would say that not all of them were politically aware of what their role in the parliament [is] (KII 002, F)

This may be partially responsive to the emphasis from community members on the need for MPs to deliver benefits to their constituents, as reflected in the FGDs and in the survey results above (Figure 31). This creates a tension between delivering constituent benefits and focusing on national-level policy issues, as identified in one KII:

> Parliament is always empty when Parliament sitting. I think they [MPs] look more to the people. When the people [are] in need, they spend more time with the people than sitting in the parliament to make bills.... Maybe they would have a mind that says 'my people put me in there, so when they call me, I have to listen to them rather than sitting in there'. But they don't realise that that's the main thing they are there for, to make bills, to make decision for the country. (KII 002, F)

This 'paradox of poor political governance' is explored by Wood (2013) who notes that most Solomon Islands voters select candidates based on local considerations, in particular who is more likely to help their communities directly. Therefore, MPs are incentivised to focus locally, which perpetuates the issue of poor national-level governance and representation that disincentivises voters from voting based on national considerations in the first place.

The weakness of party politics was seen by KII and FGD participants as part of this issue, because when people are elected as independents, or are elected as party MPs but with little party loyalty, they serve for themselves and their voters rather than pursuing bigger policy and development objectives at the national level.

Trust in political actors

Trust in political actors varies across different institutions (Figure 34). Trust in National Government is slightly lower than satisfaction with National MPs, while trust in Provincial/City governments is lower than satisfaction with Provincial/City council members (Figure 32). This reflects the issues discussed above, that individual representatives are trusted more for what they can do for a community, rather than what they do more broadly within the institution of government. The most trusted institution is the court system, although it is trusted by under 50% of voters. SIEC also has a relatively high level of trust (46.9%), although also below 50%. When asked for the reasons for their low level of trust in SIEC, the most common response was that voters never hear from them about their work (Figure 35), which is consistent with the low levels of awareness of SIEC (Figure 4). Other reasons include concern that SIEC is influenced by political leaders and that there is a lack of transparency and accountability during elections.

Statistical testing (**Annex E**) highlights substantial geographic variation in trust across institutions. Compared to respondents in Honiara, eligible voters in Western and Isabel Provinces have significantly higher odds of reporting higher levels of trust across all institutions.[9] In contrast, eligible voters in Malaita are significantly less likely to report high levels of trust in accountability and electoral institutions, including SIICAC, the courts, and the SIEC, compared to Honiara.

Trust in political actors in the 2014 election seems to be slightly higher than the current levels, although direct comparisons should be treated with caution (Sustineo 2017). In 2014 the National government, the court system and the police were trusted by at least 50% of voters (see **Annex D**).

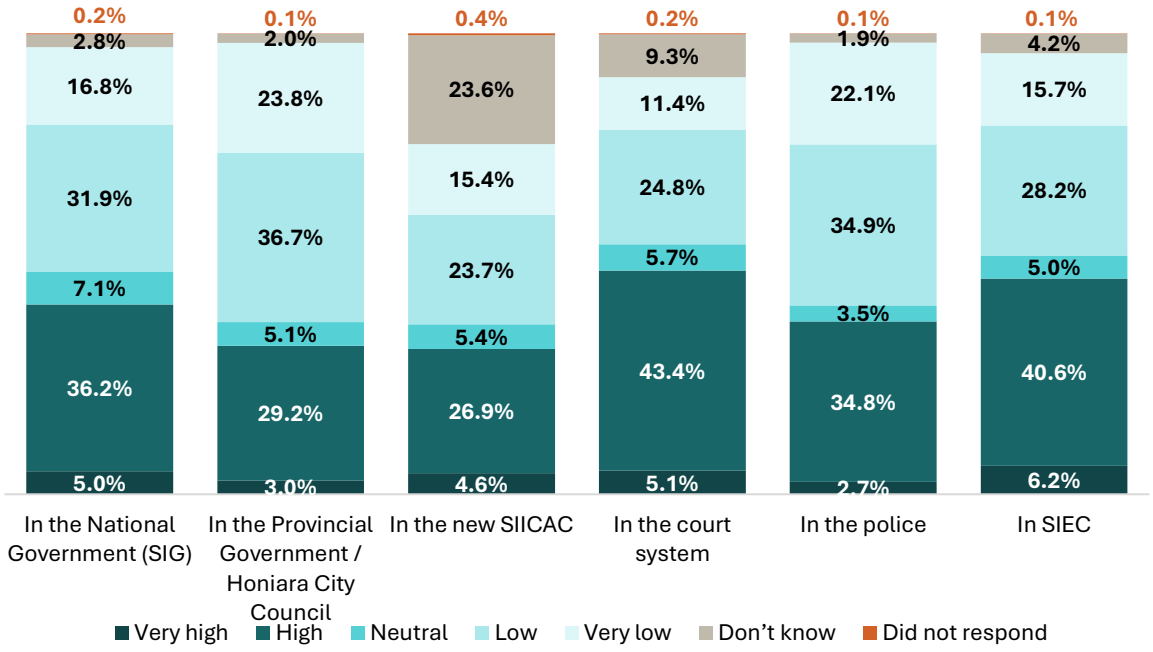


Figure 34: Trust in political actors (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence interval)

[9] The difference in trust in Provincial Government compared to Honiara is only marginally significant (at the 10% level), whereas all other reported differences are statistically significant at the 5% level.

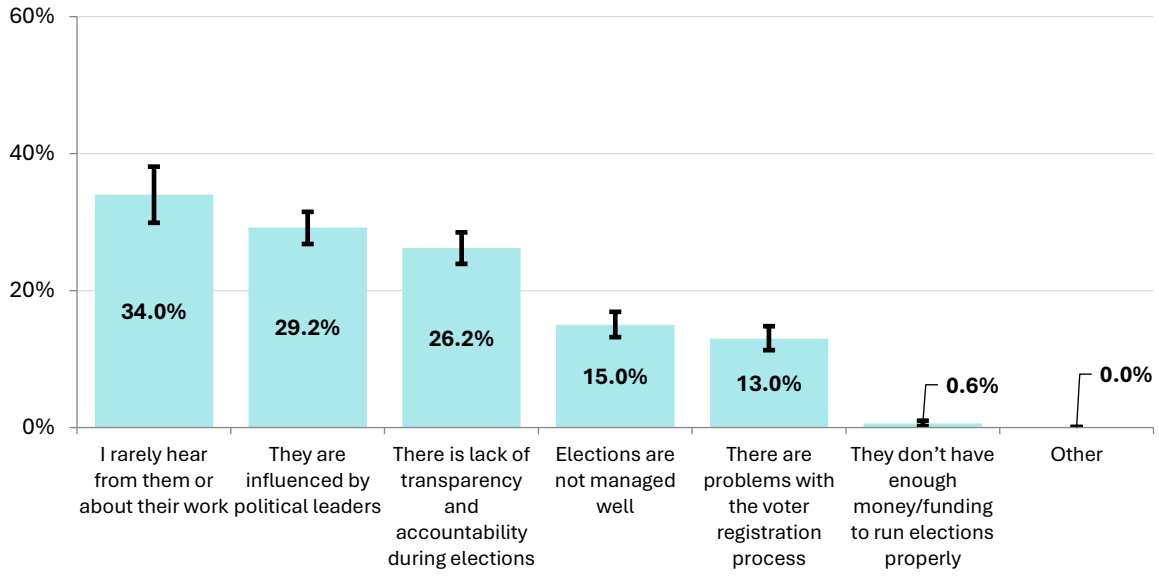


Figure 35: Reasons for low trust in the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (population-weighted estimate, 95% confidence intervals)

Note: Percentages represent the estimated proportion of the voting population across the six provinces selecting each option. Multiple responses were allowed. This question was asked only of respondents who said they have low or very low trust in the Solomon Islands Electoral Commissions,



Voting in the 2024 elections

Source: SIEC

5 Considerations for future support

Aligned with the study's objectives to understand voter confidence in electoral machinery, engagement with political processes, and satisfaction with political actors, this section highlights areas UNDP could consider in shaping future support. The emphasis is on translating observed perceptions and experiences into practical directions for strengthening the integrity, inclusiveness and responsiveness of the electoral cycle.

Future support could explore how recent and planned reforms to CDFs and political finance affect incentives for vote-buying, and track whether these changes shift voter perceptions of electoral fairness and trust over time. Programming can also build on the observed gap between voters' confidence in their own autonomy and their lower confidence in others' autonomy by strengthening civic education on voting rights, freedom from pressure and practical ways to resist undue influence, directly supporting more meaningful voter engagement.

UNDP could further support work with churches, community leaders and awareness partners to gradually promote stronger norms around secrecy of the ballot and respect for individual choice, reinforcing confidence in the machinery of elections. Clear, practical communication about voter registration rules and recent legal changes, especially those affecting constituency rules and out-of-constituency voting, would help address confusion and concerns about fairness in how key electoral processes operate.

In line with the objective of enhancing inclusive participation and satisfaction with political actors, future support might prioritise improving accessibility across all stages of the electoral cycle for women, young people and people with disabilities, and strengthening logistics and transparency around counting, venue accessibility and voter secrecy provisions. It could also expand voter education and public communication beyond Honiara, tailoring information to provincial and rural contexts and explaining changes to electoral rules and related legislation in simple, concrete terms, so that citizens can better understand and engage with political processes and institutions.

Taken together, these considerations point to possible directions that could inform UNDP's decision-making on any future support to the electoral cycle in Solomon Islands. They highlight opportunities to build on existing strengths in electoral administration, while attending more closely to voter perceptions, information needs and inclusion.

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Annex A Detailed Methodology

Sustineo's methodology for this project was designed and refined in collaboration with UNDP and our on-the-ground data partners. This was facilitated through regular correspondence between the project team and UNDP, and by Sustineo drafting documents such as a Work Plan and a Logistics and Mobilisation Plan, which were submitted to UNDP for feedback and revised to ensure that they suited the capacity and needs of the client and all project partners.

Sustineo employed a mixed-methods approach for data collection and analysis over the project. These processes saw contributions from all partners in the research team. Asples Pacific Research (APR) led the training and on-the-ground oversight of data collection, while Dignity Pasifik recruited and led the enumerator teams and conducted the survey and FGDs. Sustineo oversaw the entire process, while also leading the literature review, KIIs, and data analysis.

This mixed-methods approach included:

Method	Description	Responsibility
Literature review	The literature review established the foundation drawing on previous research related to electoral processes, political participation, and voter perceptions in Solomon Islands. It informed both the study design, as well as the integrative reporting.	Sustineo
Perception survey	The survey gauged public perceptions regarding the electoral process in Solomon Islands. It was administered to a representative sample of eligible voters across the target provinces and formed the primary basis for reporting.	APR leadership; Dignity Pasifik enumerators; Sustineo oversight
Focus group discussions (FGDs)	The FGDs extended and deepened the insights gained from the perception survey. FGDs were held with community members in each provincial capital and with special interest groups in Honiara.	APR leadership; Dignity Pasifik enumerators; Sustineo oversight
Key informant interviews	Key informant interviews were used to socialise the survey with key actors and agencies at an early stage in the research process. They were also used to collect additional qualitative data to supplement the desk review and the survey data.	Sustineo
Survey data analysis	Analysis of survey data including cleaning, analysing through R and comparing results to previous datasets where appropriate.	Sustineo
Qualitative data analysis	Qualitative analysis of FGD and KII data involved thematic coding of transcripts and notes to extract key themes and findings.	Sustineo
Integrative analysis	Insights from the literature review have been integrated with survey and qualitative data to draw out insights into electoral perceptions and participation. This includes comparisons with data from previous surveys where appropriate.	Sustineo

Research ethics

Inclusive and culturally appropriate data collection

This research approach was grounded in participatory dialogue and inclusiveness. This started with a collaborative approach to working with the UNDP and the SECSIP team to design the research approach and continued through the project in interactions with key stakeholders and individuals at the community level. Partnership with local and regional data collection organisations, and recruitment of local enumerators at the provincial level, ensured that data collection was culturally appropriate, in local languages and respectful off all participants.

In the field

All fieldwork was underpinned by the ideals of free, prior, and informed consent. Ensuring participants' rights to understand the project is central to our fieldwork approach and conduct and was demonstrated through the provision of information sheets or verbal explanations of the purpose of the research to all participants. Our team of researchers and enumerators are very familiar with ethical principles guiding the data collection processes, and these topics were included in enumerator training sessions. Training included participant consent, culturally appropriate conduct of data collection, and respecting the rights of participants not to participate or to withdraw from the survey or interview at any time.

Part of our ethics management involves ensuring anonymity of participants and data security. Participant names were not shared with any other parties outside the research team. Any major issues encountered during data collection were reported to the Sustineo project manager and elevated to the client if deemed necessary. Our fieldwork policies included mandating the use of a password or biometric login to each device, ensuring all available security patches and software updates were installed, and each enumerator had their own device for exclusive use throughout fieldwork.

In the office

We follow robust rules for ensuring the safe and secure storage of survey data. Once a survey form was completed and submitted, it remained stored on the device until internet access was available. When connected to the internet, the survey forms were uploaded to Kobo. For data cleaning and coding, the data was saved to Sustineo's secure cloud storage. During the project, any copy notes or other project documents from fieldwork were stored responsibly by our in-country partners. At the conclusion of the project these documents will be destroyed.

In addition to our own ethics processes, we follow a range of ethical guidelines, such as:

- *Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations*, 2013 which was developed by the Australasian Evaluation Society
- Organisation-based standards such as social and environmental responsibility, M&E frameworks/policies
- *Principles and guidelines for ethical research and evaluation in development* 2017, which was developed by the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID).

Literature Review

A literature review was conducted at the inception stage of the process, engaging with the academic and grey literature around elections and governance in Solomon Islands. The review also drew on previous related studies including these conducted by Sustineo:

- 2015 SIEC Voter Awareness Survey (Sustineo 2015)
- 2017 Perception of Peacebuilding Survey (Sustineo 2017)
- 2019 Women Leader Survey (Sustineo 2019)
- 2020 Civic Engagement Survey (Sustineo 2020)

Perception survey

Sampling strategy

The survey was implemented through a representative sampling strategy of all eligible voters across 5 provinces and Honiara (see Table 7). The survey excluded difficult to reach provinces which means that our sample is not representative at the national level, rather is representative of the provinces included in the sample. Given that the sampled provinces represent 85% of the total population, these estimates are consistent with the vast majority of the population. However, as the excluded populations share characteristics that are likely to be underrepresented in the larger population, the take aways from comparisons to other nationally representative population-based surveys should be treated with caution.

Table 7: Estimated voting age population in Solomon Islands by province

Province	Estimated voting age population[10]	% of national voting age population
Provinces included in the sample		
Malaita	115,413	24.0%
Guadalcanal	102,907	21.4%
Honiara	86,569	18.0%
Western	62,875	13.1%
Isabel	20,993	4.4%
Central	20,256	4.2%
Sub total	*409,013*	*84.9%*
Additional provinces not included in the sample		
Choiseul	20,562	4.3%
Makira-Ulawa	34,467	7.2%
Temotu	14,912	3.1%
Rennell & Bellona	2,739	0.6%
Sub total	*72,680*	*15.1%*
Total	**481,693**	**100.0%**

[10] Our sample for this proposal is based on 2019 Census data.

Survey design

The Perception Survey was designed, redesigned and piloted in close consultation with UNDP and the Sustineo enumerator team. Sustineo employed specific steps to ensure the integrity of the survey instrument, and relevance and sustainability of survey outcomes, as an appropriate and rigorous survey was critical to the success of the project.

The survey was designed in English to be conducted in Solomon Islands Pijin, necessitating a rigorous translation process. The survey was piloted by the enumerator teams in Honiara. Data from the pilot was analysed and the questionnaire was modified where necessary.

The enumerators' close engagement with the survey design, conduct and associated debriefs after pilots not only served to validate the survey design, identify question misinterpretation, foster project ownership and ensure translations were credible, but also to build the enumeration team's understanding of the survey and its purpose.

The Survey has 75 questions under 6 sections: (1) Screening questions, (2) Socio-demographic questions, (3) Questions on confidence in elections, (4) Questions on engagement in political process, (5) Questions on awareness and media, (6) Questions on satisfaction with political actors. During fieldwork, the finalised survey instrument took on average 30-35 minutes to complete.



Enumerator team conducting surveys in Guadalcanal Province, December 2025
Source: Dignity Pasifik

Enumerator training and supervision

All enumerators participated in training activities that covered how the finalised instrument would be implemented, ethical conduct of the survey, and dealing with potentially challenging situations.

Training was conducted initially in Honiara by the APR Field Supervisors, with support from the Sustineo team. This initial group of enumerators conducted the survey in Honiara, Guadalcanal and Central provinces, then split up into smaller groups to travel to the other provinces where additional enumerators were recruited and trained by the Team Leaders.

Enumerators were overseen by Dignity Pasifik Field Team Leaders in each location, with daily de-briefs with the Dignity Pasifik and APR Field Supervisors to set expectations and address emerging challenges.



Enumerator team in Central Province, December 2025
Source: Dignity Pasifik

Data collection and quality assurance

Fieldwork was conducted in person across November and December 2025. Participation was completely voluntary, strictly confidential, and in the languages of the respondents.

Enumerators collected data by going from house to house in the designated village. All surveys were completed face to face with participants in Pijin, with results being recorded on tablets into KoboToolbox. Two enumeration teams carried out all data collection. Each enumerator team was made up on 1 APR Supervisor, 1 Dignity Pasifik Team Leader, and 8 enumerators (4 males and 4 females).

The enumeration teams were directed to employ a standard approach to sampling in each village. Before arriving at a new village, Dignity Pasifik staff sent emails or letters to community leaders, then upon arrival the team leader and supervisor met with the relevant village chief, church leaders or elders to confirm their permission for the survey to be conducted. Once permission was granted, the entire village was informed by village elders that the survey was taking place. The team leader identified the centre of the village and the enumerators split into 4 teams, with each team including a male and a female enumerator. Each team walked in a different direction (North, East, South and West). In a small village, interviewers approached the first household, and after that every second household to conduct a survey. In a larger village, enumerators approached the first household, and then every third household.

In the field, the enumerator team leader was responsible for conducting quality assurance checks. During the day, the Team Leaders conducted 'spot checks' where appropriate and reviewed completed surveys with enumerators to ensure consistency of response coding and whether all questions had been completed. Team Leaders were the key reporting point for enumerators on the number of surveys completed and, at the end of each day, collected and reviewed the completed enumerator surveys, further querying the enumerators if any inconsistencies emerged. As data came into the system, the Sustineo Data Analyst reviewed inputs and contacted the Field Supervisors if there were any data quality or consistency issues to be addressed.



Enumerator team and community members in Central province, Dec 2025

Source: Dignity Pasifik

Key Informant Interviews

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted by the project's Research Lead, Dr Tess Newton Cain, in-person in Honiara or over video conferencing software. Five interviews were held with key stakeholders who could provide insight into the perceptions of various expert or interest groups on the key research questions. Participants were interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes, and asked questions about topics such as:

- Levels of voter confidence in the machinery of elections
- Levels of voter engagement with political processes
- The role of media/social media in elections
- Levels of satisfaction with political actors
- Electoral reforms (in the context of future elections)
- Elections and democratic consolidation
- Inclusive engagement and participation of marginalized groups (women, youth, and people with disabilities)

KII respondents were drawn from government, civil society and the media. KIIs were recorded with the permission of the interviewee, and transcribed for analysis.

Focus Group Discussions

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) provided a further qualitative input to the study, allowing the researchers to explore issues in greater depth than the survey process, and to engage with targeted stakeholder groups.

12 FGDs were held in total across the six target regions (see Table 8). At least one FGD was held in each region, with groups being split by gender and/or age in some regions. In Honiara, an additional FGD was held with People with Disabilities.

Table 8: FGD locations and participants

Province	Focus group
Honiara	People with Disabilities, mixed gender
	Men
	Women
Western	Men
	Women
Malaita	Adult men
	Youth men
	Adult women
	Youth women
Guadalcanal	Mixed
Central	Mixed
Isabel	Mixed

FGDs were held in communities alongside survey data collection, conducted by Dignity Pasifik Team Leaders with the support of their enumerator teams. FGDs ran for 1-1.5 hours and focused on these topics:

- Perceived importance of elections/democratic processes
- Trust in elections
- Needed reforms
- Inclusiveness of democracy
- Political participation
- The role of the media
- Satisfaction with politicians
- Views on the 2024 join elections

FGDs were recorded with the permission of participants and transcribed or summarised as appropriate for analysis.



Focus Group Discussions in Central Province, December 2025
Source: Dignity Pasifik

Limitations

- **Inability to conduct direct comparisons with previous surveys:** Each survey referenced in this report employed different sampling strategies, levels of geographic coverage, and weighting approaches. As a result, they differ in terms of representation and methodological design.
- **Fieldwork challenges:** Access to remote provinces/wards - limited time and resources constrained choice of survey sites to some extent. In addition, the timing of the data collection period (in the lead up to Christmas) created limitations in terms of people being available to take part in the surveys (e.g. some people had left Honiara to return to home provinces and/or were caught up with preparations and did not have time/inclination to take part. Furthermore, in urban areas (especially Honiara), daytime employment and schooling reduced participant availability. As a result, urban respondent may skew toward individuals with more flexible schedules (e.g., informal workers, unemployed, retirees).
- **Assumption of correct population benchmark for weight construction:** Population weights constructed on 2019 census data (6 years old at time of survey). This may introduce residual bias into weighted estimates.
- **Assumption of representativeness of survey respondents:** Weighting assumes that respondents within each post-stratification cell (e.g., rural women aged 18–29 in a given province) are representative of all individuals in that cell. If non-response or selection bias exists within cells, weighting cannot fully correct for it. This is because the weighting strategy adjusts for known design features and observable characteristics (geographical location, gender, age), but it does not correct for unobserved factors that may influence participation such as those outlined in the second dot point (e.g., political engagement, mobility, or availability at the time of interview).

Annex B Unweighted Respondent Profile

This section presents the graphs describing the demographic characteristics of survey respondents. The figures shown in the graph are raw (unweighted) count. They reflect the actual composition of respondents who participated in the survey, rather than representing the broader eligible voting-age population which is presented in **Annex C**.

The total number of respondents to the survey was 1,399 spread across Honiara and five provinces (Figure 36), with a small majority from urban areas (Figure 37). The largest group of respondents was from the 21-25 age range, but there was a spread across all voting ages (Figure 38). Just over half of survey respondents were male (Figure 39).



Figure 36: Respondents by province (N = 1,399)

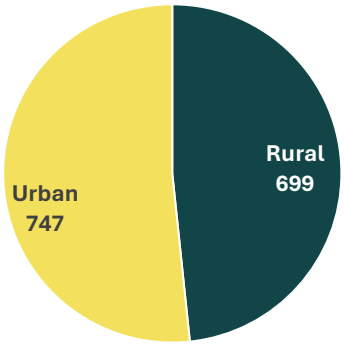


Figure 37: Respondents by urban-rural status (N = 1,399)

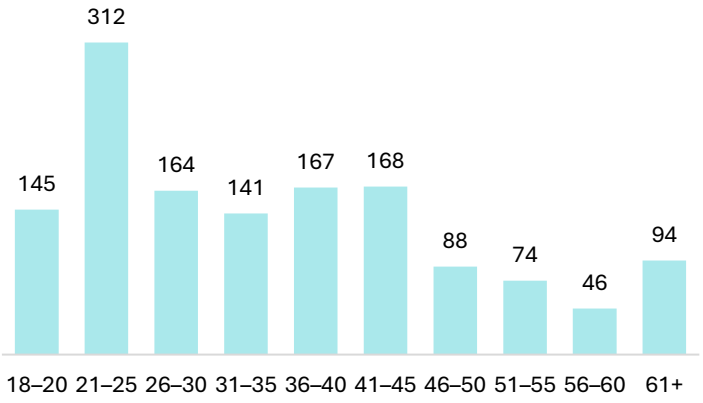


Figure 38: Respondents by age (N = 1,399)

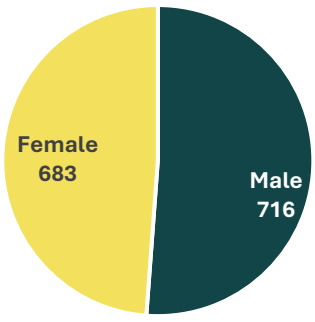


Figure 39: Respondents by gender (N = 1,399)

Figure 40 shows the education spread of respondents, with a majority having attended secondary school. Figure 41 shows the disability status of respondents, with a majority reporting no disabilities.

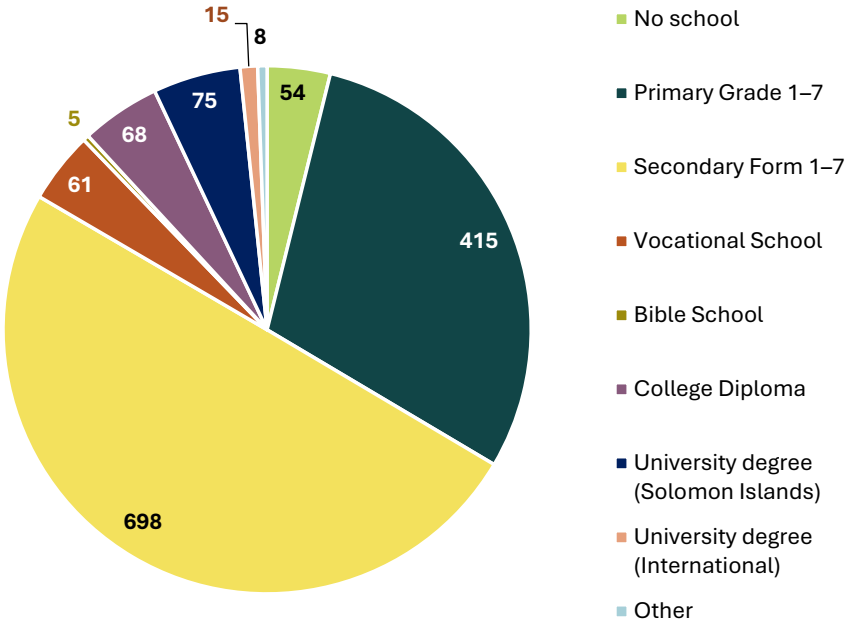


Figure 40: Respondents by highest level of education attained (N = 1,399)

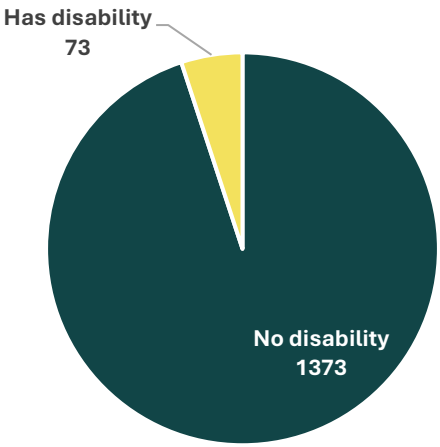


Figure 41: Respondents by disability status (N = 1,399)

Annex C Weighted Demographic Profile

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the sample after applying population weights. Weighting adjusts the survey responses so that the sample more closely reflects the actual distribution of the eligible voting-age population in the sampled provinces. For example, population weighting corrects for the oversampling of respondents in Honiara and other urban wards that occurred due to logistical convenience during fieldwork (see **Box 6** for details on the population weighting strategy).

As a result, the figures shown in this section represent our best estimate of the demographic composition of the eligible voting-age population in the six sampled provinces (Honiara, Central, Malaita, Guadalcanal, Isabel, and Western).

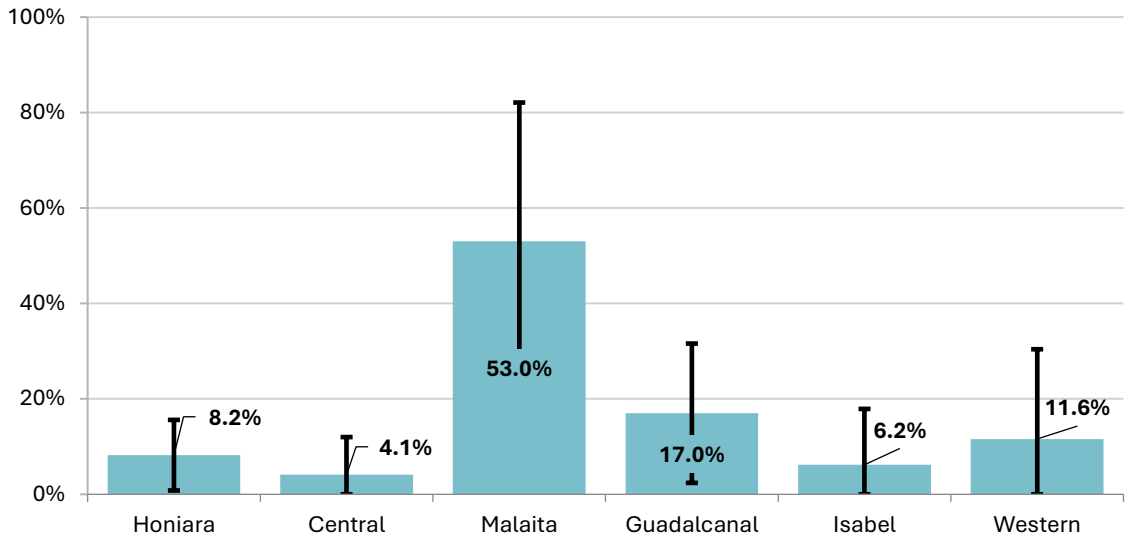


Figure 42: Population-weighted distribution by province (95% confidence interval)

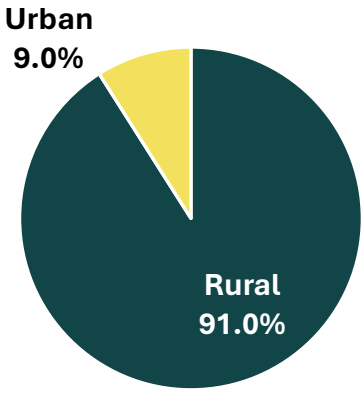


Figure 43: Population-weighted distribution of urban-rural status

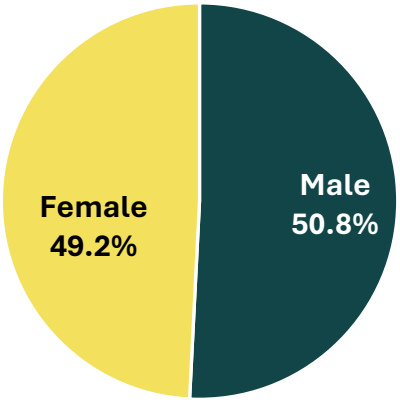


Figure 44: Population-weighted distribution of gender

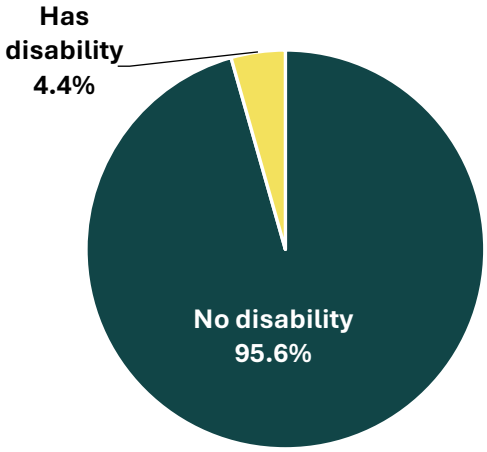


Figure 45: Population-weighted distribution of disability status

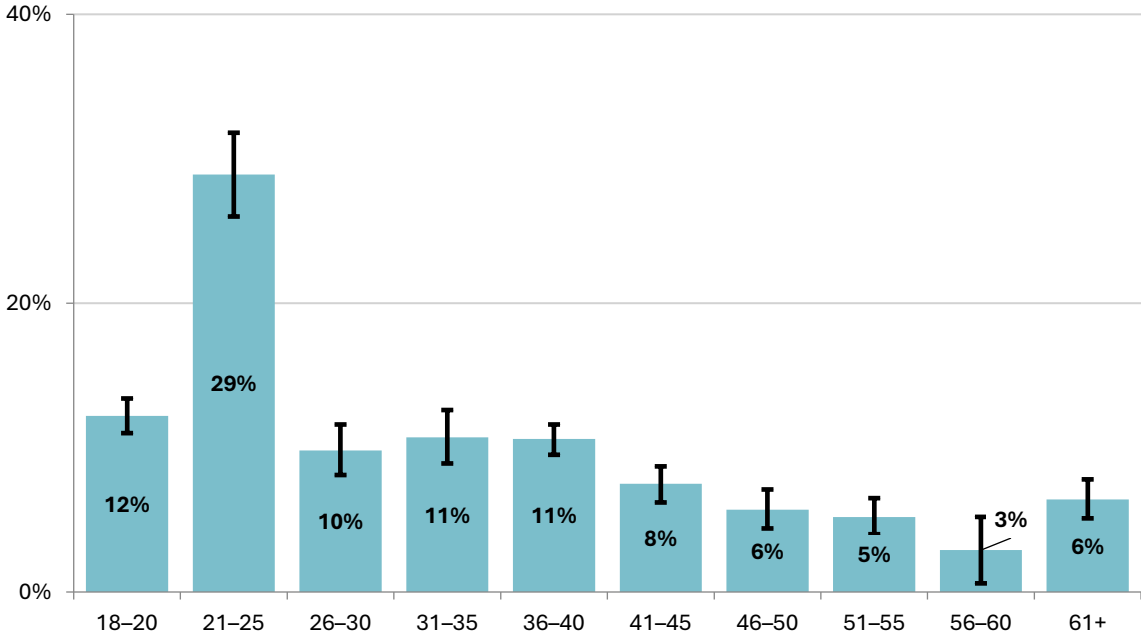


Figure 46: Population-weighted distribution of age (95% confidence interval)

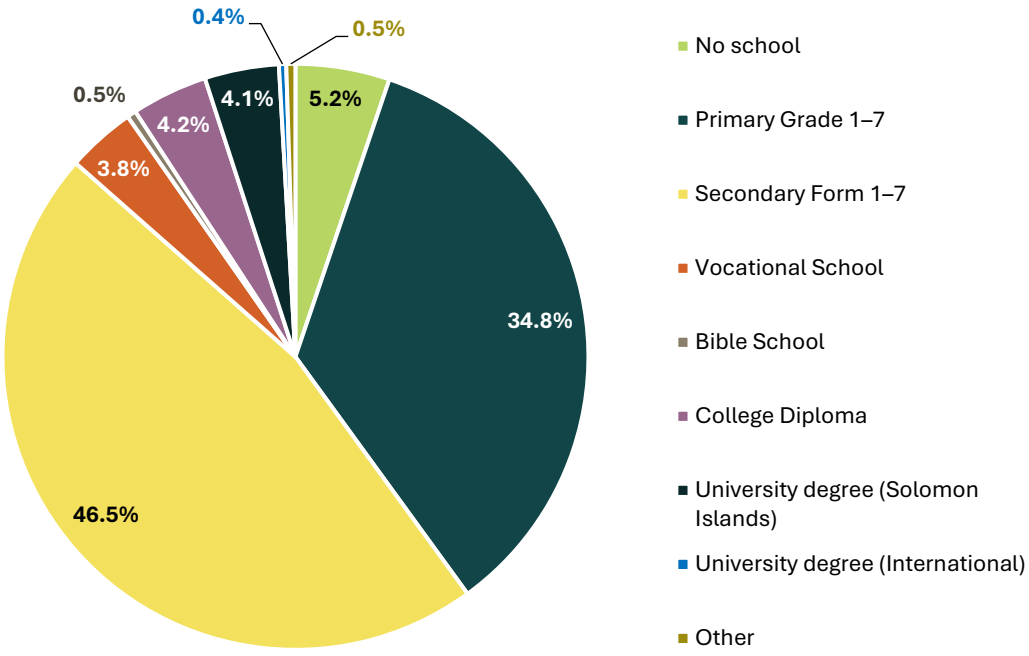


Figure 47: Population-weighted distribution of highest level of education attained

Data analysis

Qualitative analysis

Full transcripts for each KII were generated, while evidence from FGDs varied from full transcripts to summary notes.

An iterative thematic coding process was used to analyse KII and FGD data, beginning with codes based on the guiding questions, with further codes added as needed based on emerging themes. Key quotations were recorded, and preliminary findings for each thematic code were developed.

Survey data analysis

Once data was received in Kobo Toolbox, quality control measures were taken to ensure data accurately presented survey results. This included a process of data cleaning, and a consideration of survey weights (see **Boxes 5** and **6**).

Survey questions were summarised using frequencies of various responses. These were then converted to percentages of total responses for a given question, to allow for ease of interpretation. Categorical data was analysed using chi-square tests where relevant. All chi-square analysis was performed using statistical software package R. Where graphs were used, these were based on total counts for each possible response to a given question, with standard error bars (95% confidence interval) displayed.

The findings are organised against key themes that emerged through the analysis: Voter confidence in the electoral processes, voter engagement with political processes, satisfaction with political actors. Statistical tests were conducted to examine whether there are statistically significant differences between demographic groups in their responses (see **Box 3** for the types of tests and interpretation, and **Annex E** for the output tables).

Integrative analysis

Evidence from the literature review, qualitative data from KIIs and FGDs, and quantitative data from the survey were drawn together to draw out findings on each of the key research topics. Some quantitative data was compared to previous survey results to explore changes in perceptions, however data was not always directly comparable. This process included analysis by the quantitative and qualitative data analyst teams within Sustineo, as well as inputs by subject experts, Kerryn Baker and Terence Wood.

Box 5: Data Cleaning



To ensure the reliability and integrity of the survey data, several data cleaning and quality assurance procedures were implemented.

Data integrity checks

- **Removal of test and pilot data:** Records identified as test submissions, pilot interviews, or enumerator practice surveys were excluded from the final analytical dataset.
- **Survey duration:** All interviews with a completion time of less than 10 minutes were removed, as these were considered unlikely to reflect adequate engagement with the questionnaire.

Recoding of responses

Some multiple-choice questions allowed respondents to select "Other" and provide an open-ended specification. These open-ended responses were systematically reviewed. Where responses clearly corresponded to existing predefined categories, they were recoded accordingly.

Outlier and response pattern review

The dataset was reviewed for potential indicators of low-quality responses. This included checks for straight-lining, defined as identical responses across large blocks of attitudinal or perception questions, which may indicate satisficing behaviour or limited engagement with the survey instrument.

Box 6: Survey Weights and Design Considerations



Survey weights were calculated using inverse probability of selection for the multi-stage sampling design, combined with post-stratification adjustments to correct for purposive sampling decisions. Geographic weights reflected the probability of ward selection within province × urban/rural strata and village selection within wards. Post-stratification adjustments were applied to align sample composition with known population distributions for urban/rural status, gender, and age groups.

The sample design resulted in variation in final weights, particularly in Malaita Province. Malaita's population is approximately 6% urban (primarily in the ward of Auki), but practical sample considerations led to urban areas representing 37% of the Malaita sample. The resulting post-stratification adjustments appropriately correct for this imbalance but produce divergent weights, where urban respondents receive very low weights while rural respondents receive correspondingly higher weights.

These design features have two key implications. Weighted estimates correctly represent the surveyed population, however, simultaneously they inflate those standard errors for Malaita specific estimates, and potentially for analyses involving urban/rural comparisons. All analyses account for the complex survey design including clustering, stratification, and weights to ensure appropriate variance estimation.

Annex D Data from previous Sustineo research studies

UNDP and others have previously conducted similar surveys on electoral and governance processes in the Solomon Islands, including:

- 2015 SIEC Voter Awareness Survey (Sustineo 2015)
- 2017 Perception of Peacebuilding Survey (Sustineo 2017)
- 2019 Women Leader Survey (Sustineo 2019)
- 2020 Civic Engagement Survey (Sustineo 2020)

While results from these studies are not directly comparable to the current study due to methodological differences, some similar questions were asked in previous surveys. This data is included here to offer some context for the current research.

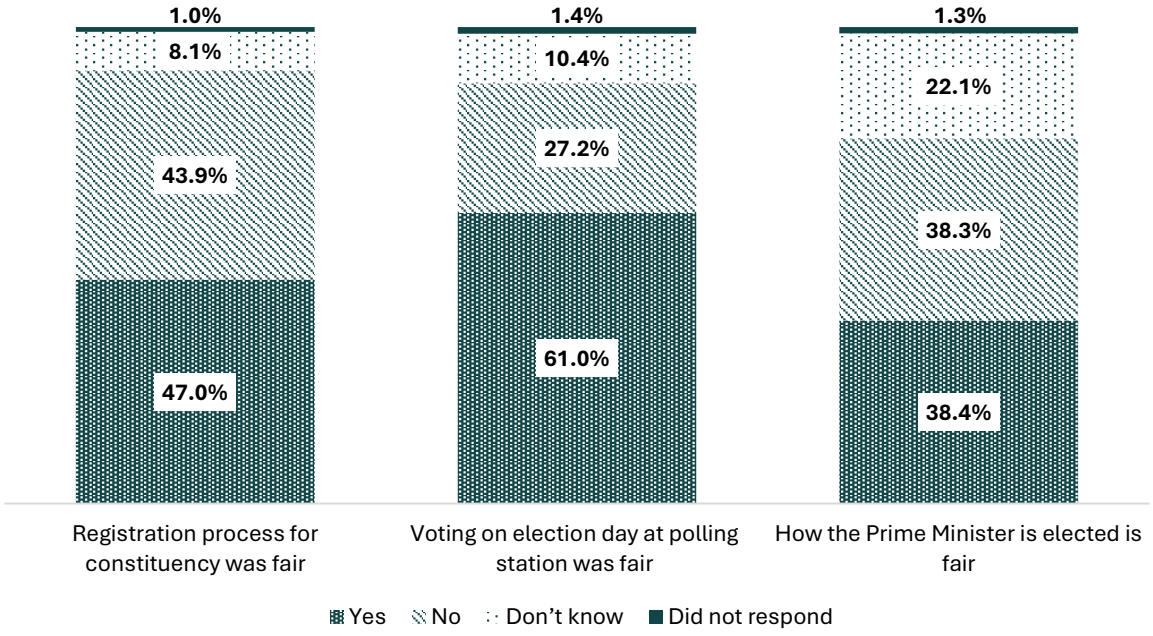


Figure 48: Perception of fairness of different democratic processes in relation to the 2019 national general election.
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2020.

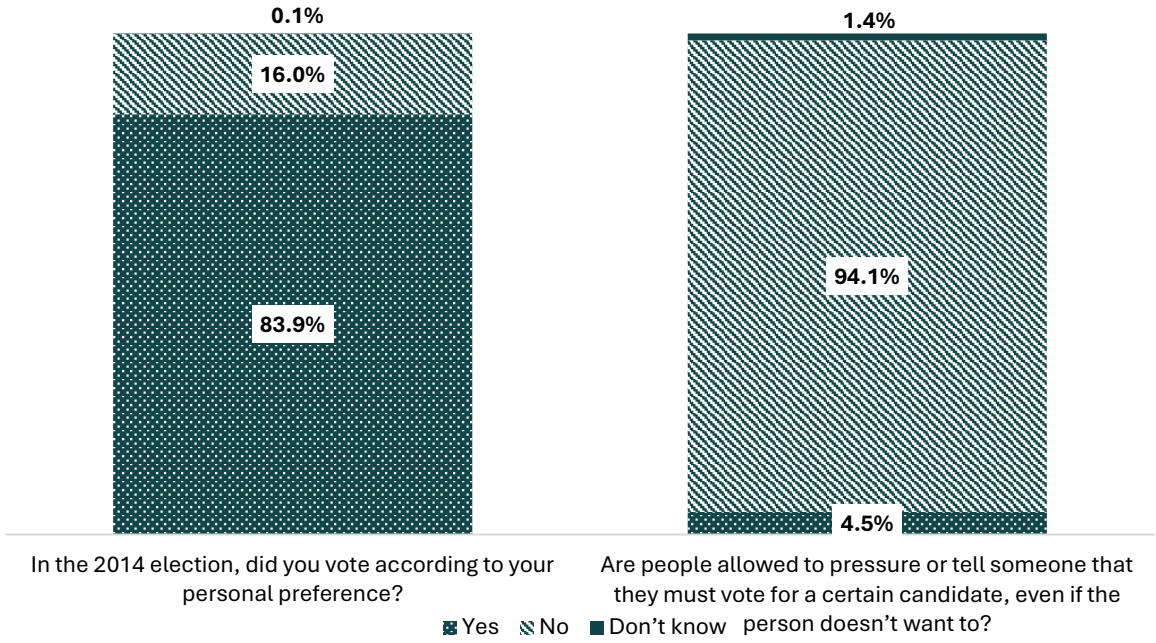


Figure 49: Self-reported voting autonomy and perceived acceptability of pressuring voters in 2014
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2019

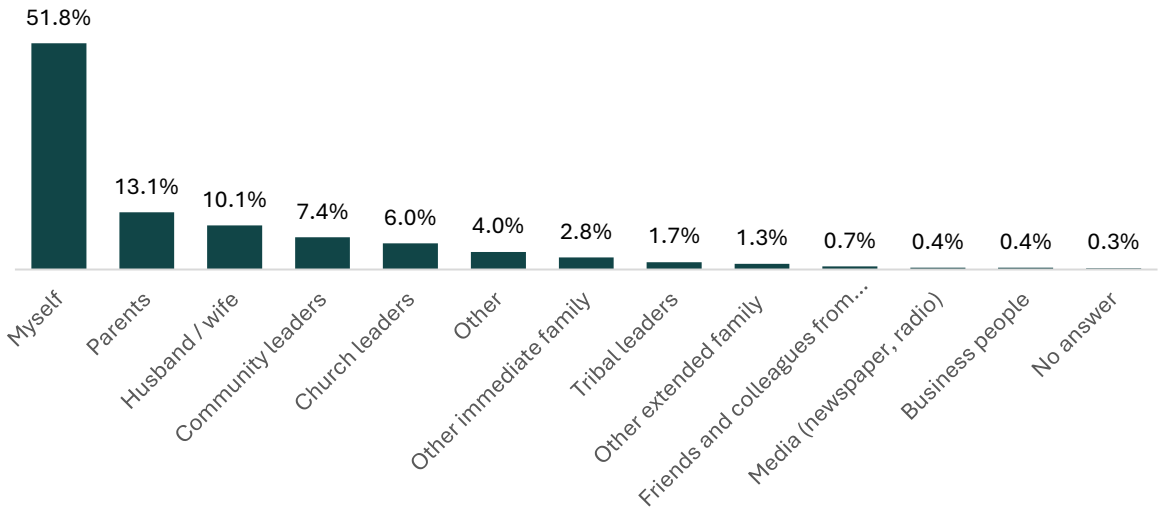


Figure 50: Advice sources that voters valued the most in the 2014 election
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2019

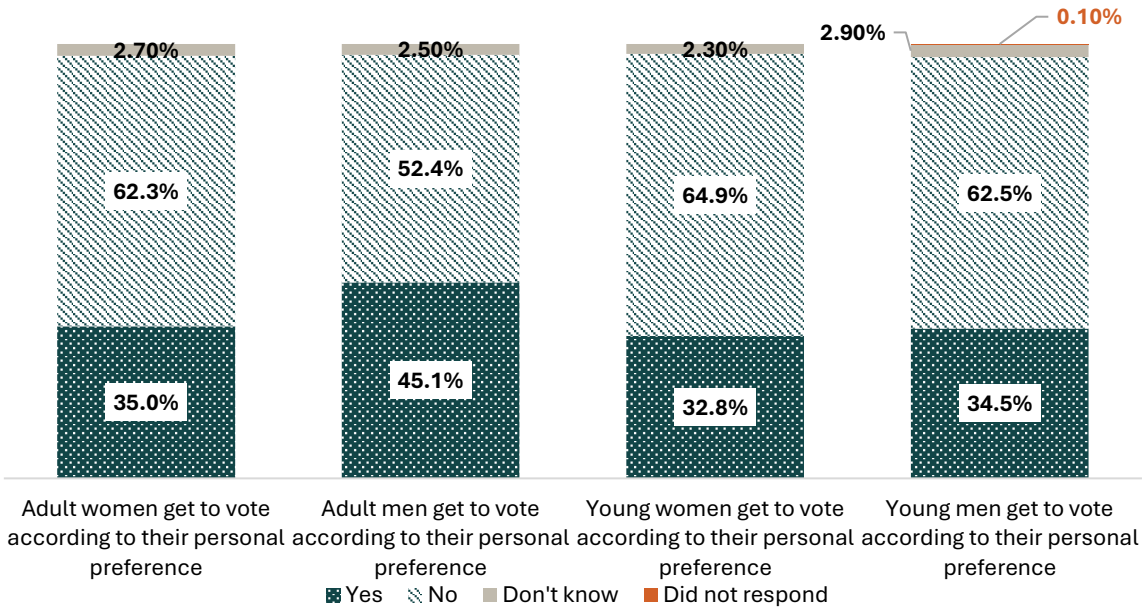


Figure 51: Awareness of voting autonomy in the constituency in the 2014 elections
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2019

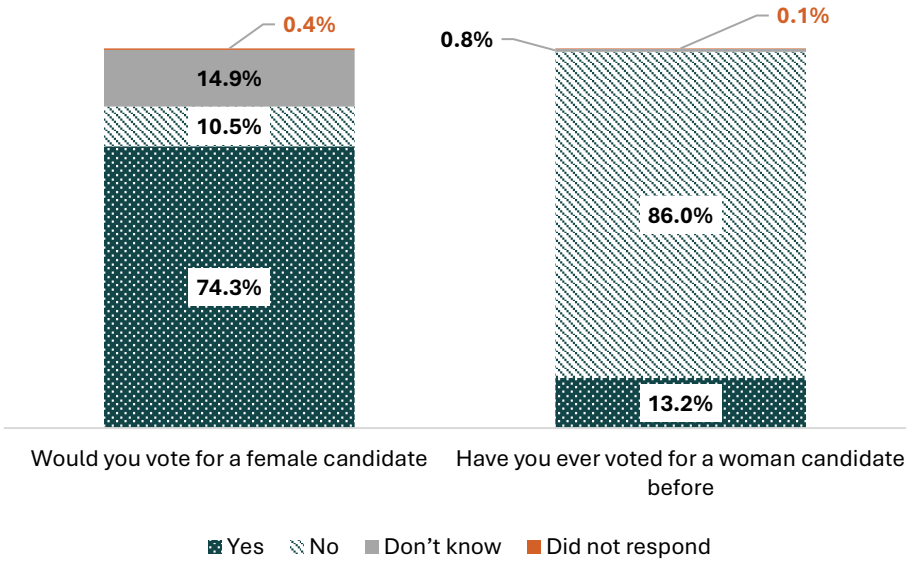


Figure 52: Willingness to vote for a female candidate and whether they have previously voted for a women candidate in 2014 election
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2019

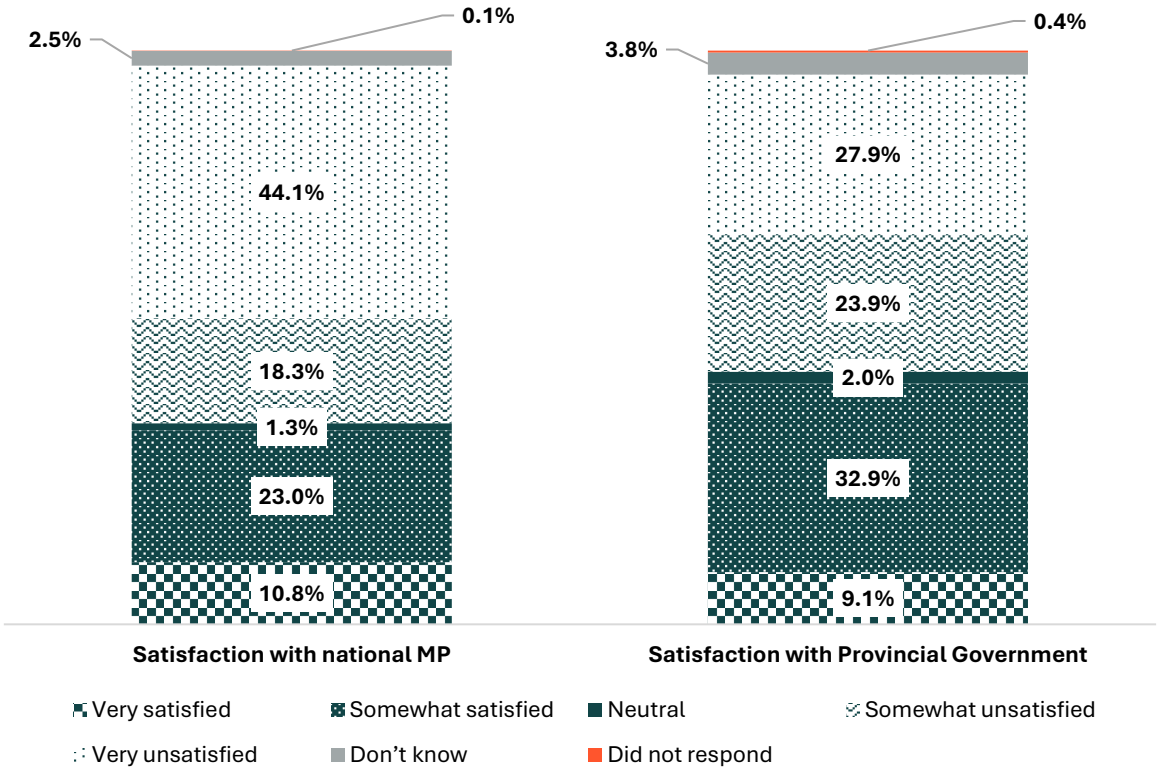


Figure 53: Satisfaction with National MP and Provincial government
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2017

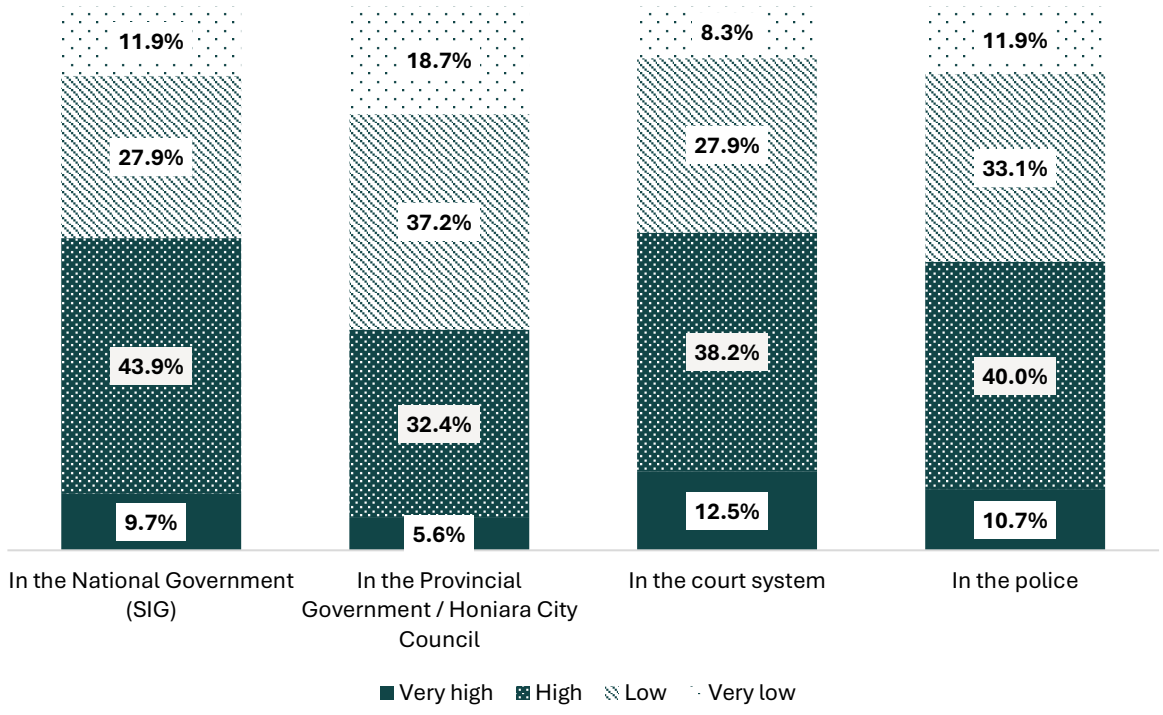


Figure 54: Trust in political actors in the 2014 election
Source: Reproduced from Sustineo 2017

Annex E Statistical Testing

To assess the relationships between respondent characteristics and key outcome variables, a series of regression models were estimated. The choice of model specification depended on the nature of the dependent variable. For ordinal outcomes – such as trust in elections and satisfaction with elected representatives – ordinal logistic regression models were employed. Logistic regression models were used for binary outcomes – such as perceived representativeness of Parliament, voter registration, turnout, voting autonomy, and attitudes toward female candidates.

All models included a consistent set of control variables to account for potential confounding factors. These controls comprised gender (binary), age group, disability status, province, and education level. Honiara was used as the reference category for geographic comparisons, enabling interpretation of provincial differences relative to the capital.

Statistical significance was assessed using the p-value thresholds of 5%, and results are interpreted in terms of the direction and relative likelihood of outcomes (i.e., whether certain groups are more or less likely to report a given perception or behaviour compared to a reference group). The analysis focuses on identifying statistically significant associations rather than causal relationships.

Marginal plots

To aid interpretation of the regression results, marginal plots of predicted probabilities were generated from the estimated models. These plots present adjusted group-level differences in outcomes while holding control variables at their observed values.

For ease of interpretation and visualisation, a small number of ordinal (Likert-scale) variables were transformed into binary variables and estimated using logistic regression models prior to plotting (instead of ordinal logistic models). This transformation was applied only where necessary to ensure consistency in graphical presentation and does not affect the underlying regression results reported in the tables.

Output tables

▲ Coefficient is larger than 0 and statistically significant at the 5% level

▼ Coefficient is smaller than 0 and statistically significant at the 5% level

○ Coefficient is not statistically significant at the 5% level

Table 9: Regression output table - Voter confidence in the electoral processes

Variable	Model 1: Trust in Elections (Ordinal Logistic)	Model 2: Registration Fair (Logistic)	Model 3: Voting Fair (Logistic)	Model 4: Counting Fair (Logistic)	Model 5: PM Election Fair (Logistic)	Model 6: Is the Parliament Representative (Logistic)
Female *(Baseline: Male)*	○	○	○	○	○	▲
Age group: 26-40 *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Age group: 41+ *(Baseline: 18)*	○	▼	○	○	○	○
Has disability *(Baseline: No disability)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Province: Guadalcanal *(Baseline: Honiara)*	○	○	○	○	○	▲
Province: Malaita *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▼	○	○	○	○	▲
Province: Western *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	○	▲	▲	▲
Province: Isabel *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Province: Central *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	○	○	○	▼
Highest level of education completed: Primary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	▲	○
Highest level of education completed: Secondary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	▲	○

Variable	Model 1: Trust in Elections (Ordinal Logistic)	Model 2: Registration Fair (Logistic)	Model 3: Voting Fair (Logistic)	Model 4: Counting Fair (Logistic)	Model 5: PM Election Fair (Logistic)	Model 6: Is the Parliament Representative (Logistic)
Highest level of education completed: Vocational School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	▼	○	○	○	▲	○
Highest level of education completed: Bible School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	▼
Highest level of education completed: College Diploma *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	▲	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (Solomon Islands) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (International) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	▼	○	○	○	▲	○

Table 10: Regression output table - Voter engagement with political processes

Variables	Model 7: Women Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 8: Men Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 9: Young Women Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 10: Young Men Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 11: Females with Disability Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 12: Males with Disability Vote According to Preference (Logistic)
Female *(Baseline: Male)*	▼	○	○	○	○	○
Age group: 26-40 *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Age group: 41+ *(Baseline: 18)*	▲	○	○	○	○	○
Has disability *(Baseline: No disability)*	○	▲	○	○	○	○
Province: Guadalcanal *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	○	▲	○	○	○
Province: Malaita *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▼	○	▼	○	▼	▼
Province: Western *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▼	▼	○	▼	○	○
Province: Isabel *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	▲	▼	▼	▼
Province: Central *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲
Highest level of education completed: Primary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Secondary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	▲	○	○	○

Variables	Model 7: Women Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 8: Men Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 9: Young Women Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 10: Young Men Able to Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 11: Females with Disability Vote According to Preference (Logistic)	Model 12: Males with Disability Vote According to Preference (Logistic)
Highest level of education completed: Vocational School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Bible School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	▼	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: College Diploma *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	▼	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (Solomon Islands) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (International) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	▲	○	○	○

Table 11: Regression output table - Voter engagement with political processes (*Continued*)

Variable	Model 13: Registered to Vote in 2024 (Logistic)	Model 14: Voted in 2024 (Logistic)	Model 15: Voted According to Own Preference (Logistic)	Model 16: Would Vote for a Woman (Logistic)	Model 17: Ever Voted for a Woman (Logistic)
Female *(Baseline: Male)*	○	▼	▼	○	○
Age group: 26-40 *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○	▲	○	▲
Age group: 41+ *(Baseline: 18)*	▲	○	▲	○	▲
Has disability *(Baseline: No disability)*	○	○	○	▲	○
Province: Guadalcanal *(Baseline: Honiara)*	○	▲	▲	○	▲
Province: Malaita *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	○	▼	▼	▼
Province: Western *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	▼	▼	○
Province: Isabel *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▼	▲	▲	▼	▲
Province: Central *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲
Highest level of education completed: Primary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	▼	○
Highest level of education completed: Secondary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Vocational School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	▼	○	○	○

Variable	Model 13: Registered to Vote in 2024 (Logistic)	Model 14: Voted in 2024 (Logistic)	Model 15: Voted According to Own Preference (Logistic)	Model 16: Would Vote for a Woman (Logistic)	Model 17: Ever Voted for a Woman (Logistic)
Highest level of education completed: Bible School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: College Diploma *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	△	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (Solomon Islands) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (International) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○

Table 12: Regression output table - Voter satisfaction with political actors

Variable	Model 18: Satisfaction with National MP (Ordinal logistic)	Model 19: Satisfaction with Provincial/City Council (Ordinal logistic)
Female *(Baseline: Male)*	○	△
Age group: 26-40 *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○
Age group: 41+ *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○
Has disability *(Baseline: No disability)*	○	○
Province: Guadalcanal *(Baseline: Honiara)*	○	○
Province: Malaita *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▽	○
Province: Western *(Baseline: Honiara)*	△	△
Province: Isabel *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▽	△
Province: Central *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▽	▽
Highest level of education completed: Primary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Secondary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Vocational School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	△
Highest level of education completed: Bible School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○
Highest level of education completed: College Diploma *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (Solomon Islands) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (International) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○

Table 13: Voter trust in political institutions

Variable	Model 20: Trust in National Government (Ordinal logistic)	Model 21: Trust in Provincial Government/HCC (Ordinal logistic)	Model 22: Trust in SIICAC (Ordinal logistic)	Model 23: Trust in Courts (Ordinal logistic)	Model 24: Trust in Police (Ordinal logistic)	Model 25: Trust in SIEC (Ordinal logistic)
Female *(Baseline: Male)*	○	○	▲	▲	○	○
Age group: 26-40 *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○	○	▼	▼	○
Age group: 41+ *(Baseline: 18)*	○	○	○	○	▼	○
Has disability *(Baseline: No disability)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Province: Guadalcanal *(Baseline: Honiara)*	○	○	▲	○	▲	○
Province: Malaita *(Baseline: Honiara)*	○	○	▼	▼	○	▼
Province: Western *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Province: Isabel *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	○	▲	▲	▲	▲
Province: Central *(Baseline: Honiara)*	▲	○	▼	▼	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Primary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Secondary Form *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	▲
Highest level of education completed: Vocational School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: Bible School *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○

Variable	Model 20: Trust in National Government (Ordinal logistic)	Model 21: Trust in Provincial Government/HCC (Ordinal logistic)	Model 22: Trust in SIICAC (Ordinal logistic)	Model 23: Trust in Courts (Ordinal logistic)	Model 24: Trust in Police (Ordinal logistic)	Model 25: Trust in SIEC (Ordinal logistic)
Highest level of education completed: College Diploma *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (Solomon Islands) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	▽	○
Highest level of education completed: University degree (International) *(Baseline: No formal education / Kindergarten)*	○	○	○	○	○	○