

**REPUBLIC OF NAURU**  
**ELECTORAL (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016**  
**SECOND READING SPEECH**

**Honourable Baron Divavesi Waqa M.P**

**12<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

Mr. Speaker Sir,

I have the pleasure of introducing to the House today a Bill for the *Electoral (Amendment) Act 2016*.

The newly formed Electoral Commission has recommended these two amendments to improve the democratic process in future elections. I see these amendments as important and thank the Electoral Commission for being able to see so early in their establishment these two changes that will improve on the Electoral Act 2016.

The first one reflects on the automatic registration process introduced by the Parliament to ensure that all citizens of Nauru, no matter what age, are registered to vote. This was done so that every person on Polling Day would be able to attend a polling place and be able to participate in electing the next Parliament.

However in doing so the Electoral Act required that all automatic registrations be registered in the District of their birth. But with the passage of time, this has meant that many people no longer live in the original District of their birth and consequently were being automatically registered in the 'wrong district'.

Prior to the passing of the Electoral Act 2016 any person could register to vote in the district in which they lived at no cost. However, with the requirements of the Electoral Act 2016 placing them on the roll of their district of birth, many people now need to pay \$150 to transfer from a district that they never registered for.

Consequently, the Electoral Commission has considered that it is fairer that any person who has been automatically enrolled can transfer their enrolment from their 'auto enrolled district' to a district where now they live, at no cost. Voters who were automatically enrolled and who have already transferred would be refunded their \$150.

This process will not only be fairer to mostly young Nauruans but will allow these voters to register in their correct district and for the constituencies to truly reflect their populations.

With regard to the second amendment, the purpose of this amendment is to shift the draw for the candidate's position on the ballot paper from noon on the Sunday before the election to noon on the Saturday before the election. To achieve this change, the Electoral Commission has proposed that the time period for which a Candidate may withdraw their candidacy be shortened by one day from seven to six days.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is accompanied by an explanatory memorandum which explains the Bill in more detail.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the Bill to the House.