

BOUGAINVILLE REFERENDUM 2019

What is the Bougainville Referendum Commission?

The Bougainville Referendum Commission (BRC) is the independent body established by the two governments to conduct the referendum. The Commission is made up of seven members appointed by the governments of Papua New Guinea and of Bougainville. It works with, but is separate from, the two electoral commissions.

Neutrality

Impartiality

Transparency

Professionalism

Inclusivity

Hon Bertie Ahern
International Chair
(former Prime Minister of Ireland)
Appointed by PNG and ABG Governments



Dr Thomas Webster
Referendum Commissioner
Appointed by PNG Government



Ruby Mirinka
Referendum Commissioner
Appointed by ABG



Patilias Gamato
PNG Electoral Commissioner



George Manu
Bougainville Electoral Commissioner



Robert Igara
Referendum Commissioner
Appointed by PNG Government



Patrick Nisira
Referendum Commissioner
Appointed by ABG

The Commission takes decisions together. The Commissioners are non-partisan and impartial. All Commissioners draw on their personal and professional experience to inform the work of the Commission, and decisions are made collectively at Commission meetings.

The Chief Referendum Officer (CRO) heads the Secretariat, and is in charge of operational planning and implementation.

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What is a Referendum?

A referendum is a process of voting, like an election, but with the choice of a question instead of a choice of candidates.

Like elections the referendum will have a ballot paper, ballot boxes, polling places, scrutineers and observers. However, unlike ABG and national elections which happen every five years, the Bougainville referendum will happen once, so people cannot change their mind in five years' time.

The Bougainville referendum will offer a choice between independence from Papua New Guinea and greater autonomy within Papua New Guinea. The result will be non-binding. This means that the decision on whether or not to go ahead with the results of the referendum will rest with the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, who will have to negotiate between themselves on what the ultimate outcome will be.

