

POLLING & COUNTING

Like elections, the referendum will have a ballot paper, ballot boxes, polling places, polling officials, scrutineers and observers.

Ballot Paper

The ballot paper has the text agreed to by the two Governments:

Do you agree for Bougainville to have: Greater Autonomy; or Independence?

Voters will have to mark one box with 'X' for either choice. BRC will have awareness posters showing the ballot paper before polling.

The two governments have provided the following descriptions of each choice:

- 1. Greater autonomy:** A negotiated political settlement that provides for a form of autonomy with greater powers than those currently available under constitutional arrangements.
- 2. Independence:** An independent nation state with sovereign powers and laws, recognised under international law and by other sovereign states to be an independent state, separate from the State of Papua New Guinea.

Polling - where

There are two Voting Districts

- 1. Autonomous Region of Bougainville**
About 500 polling locations
- 2. All regions outside Bougainville (PNG, overseas).**
PNG Electoral Commission provincial offices, Lihir, Pogera, Ok Tedi, Ramu, (Overseas) Gizo, Honiara, Brisbane and Cairns.

Polling - when

Begins 23 November (for two weeks until 6 December). Polling will begin in remote locations. The Polling Schedule will be gazetted 16 October for all dates and locations.

Counting

The counting centre will be in Buka. By law, counting cannot start until polling is finished.

The BRC will announce the count for each option and return the Writ to the Governor-General, as provided by law, with the number of votes:

- For Greater Autonomy
- For Independence
- Informal ballots

There will be no declared 'winner' or voter threshold to reach, such as 80% or 50% +1.

After the count

1. 40-day appeals process
2. BRC returns to the Transitional Committee and begins closure.



Scrutineers

The Organic Law provides for Interested Parties in the Referendum: The two governments and Recognised Interest Groups. Interested parties are the only organisations permitted to appoint scrutineers

- Scrutiny of polling, transport of ballot boxes and counting
- Cannot interfere with voters or the process.

Observers

Domestic and international observers have an internationally recognised role in the electoral process.

- Observe polling and counting
- Cannot interfere with voters or the process.

Applications close for Observer groups (1 October) and Interest Groups (6 October). Enquiries to BRC - External Relations.

REFERENDUM & PUBLIC DISPLAY



What is the Bougainville Referendum?

A referendum on Bougainville's political future is set out in the Bougainville Peace Agreement. A referendum is commonly used as a democratic process to decide on a question or issue. It's like an election, but instead of candidates there is a question. This question is set by the two governments.

Like elections, the Referendum will have a ballot paper, ballot boxes, polling places, polling officials, scrutineers and observers. However, unlike ABG and national elections which happen every five years, the Bougainville Referendum will happen only once.

The Bougainville Peace Agreement says the Referendum is 'non-binding' and requires ratification by the National Parliament. **This means that the option that receives the most votes is not necessarily the final decision of the two governments.**

The Bougainville Referendum Commission (BRC) and Referendum process are governed by the Bougainville Peace Agreement, the Constitutions of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Bougainville, Organic Law on Peace-building in Bougainville, Organic Bougainville Referendum Law Regulations 2019, the BRC Charter and various agreements of the two Governments.

Referendum dates

The two governments announced the following dates on 2 August 2019:

- Issue of Writ - 27 September
- Polling begins - 23 November

The two governments have said there will be no further extensions or delays – the Referendum will be held this year.

Referendum question

The Bougainville Referendum offers a choice between greater autonomy within Papua New Guinea than current autonomy, or independence from Papua New Guinea. The question set by the two governments in October 2018 will be on the ballot paper:

Do you agree for Bougainville to have:

- 1. Greater Autonomy; or**
- 2. Independence**

Referendum process

The result will be non-binding. The two Governments have agreed on the following process:

1. Eligible people of Bougainville will vote in the referendum.
2. National Government and the ABG will consult.
3. National Parliament will make the final decision.

The Bougainville Referendum Commission (BRC) is the independent body established by the ABG and Government of PNG to conduct the Referendum. The Commission has an independent international Chair (Bertie Ahern) and six Commissioners appointed by the governments of Papua New Guinea and of Bougainville. It works with, but is separate from, the two electoral commissions. The BRC is not subject to the direction of either government and does not promote any particular outcome of the Referendum. Under the Charter, the BRC must be: Neutral, Impartial, Independent, Professional and Transparent.

ENROLMENT & PUBLIC DISPLAY

Your name must be on the Referendum Roll to vote!

Who can enrol?

Eligibility to vote is set by law and the two governments, not the BRC.

Bougainvilleans and other PNG citizens living in Bougainville:

- Have lived in Bougainville for at least six months prior to claim for enrolment
- Were born on or before 23 November 2001
- Are a PNG citizen
- Are entitled to vote in PNG National Elections.

Non-resident Bougainvilleans (Bougainvilleans living outside Bougainville):

- Have links to Bougainville by birth, adoption, marriage or clan.
- Were born on or before 23 November 2001
- Are a PNG citizen
- Are entitled to vote in PNG National Elections.

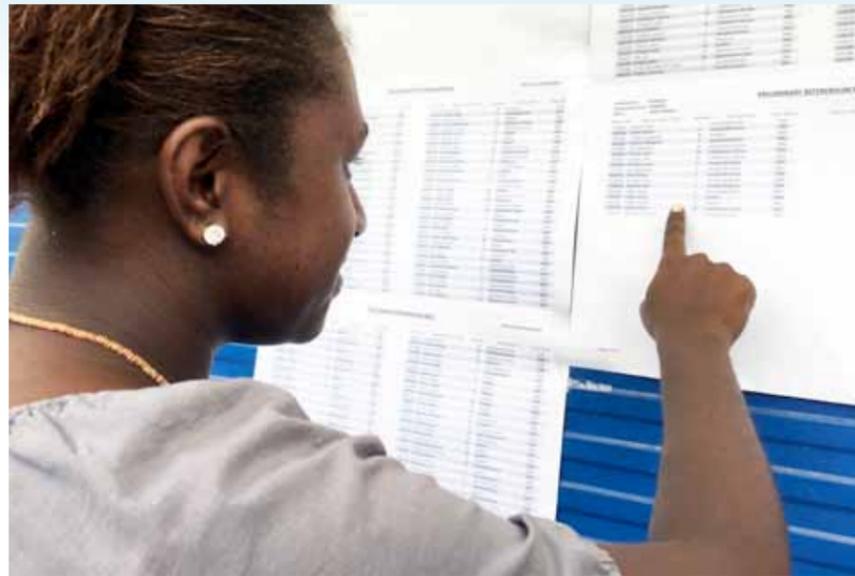
Enrolment process

Enrolment is in **three phases**:

1. April: Verification of the base working roll (2015 ABG Roll)
2. June-July: Door-to-door enrolment
3. **September**: Public display of the Preliminary Referendum roll.

BRC is working with Ward Recorders and Community Governments to enrol voters. This gives community ownership and helps build a credible Roll.

Outside Bougainville, BRC works with PNG Electoral Commission provincial offices, and overseas diplomatic missions to enrol Bougainvilleans living in Australia and Solomon Islands.



What is the public display?

From 6 - 26 September, Ward Recorders will publicly display the Preliminary Referendum Roll for your ward, in your ward. This is the list of all the people enrolled to vote in the Bougainville Referendum after phase one and two enrolment. This includes Bougainvilleans living outside Bougainville from your ward.

It is your final chance to make sure you are enrolled to vote!

What should I do?

1. Check your name is correctly enrolled (if not, see Ward Recorder for claim for enrolment / claim to transfer, or make an alteration)
2. Check if there are names of people who have died or moved from the ward (if so see Ward Recorder)
3. Lodge an objection against any ineligible voter (see Ward Recorder or Assistant Returning Officer.

OBJECTIONS

People can make an objection if they think someone on the Roll is not eligible *according to the Referendum eligibility criteria*. No other objection criteria will be accepted.

What should I do?

1. See your Ward Recorder
2. Complete **Objection Form** saying why person not eligible
3. Ward Recorder refers matter to Assistant Returning Officer (ARO)

Example: Mary sees that John, a boy in her village is on the roll. Mary knows John just had his 16th birthday so can not be old enough to enrol. On the Objection Form, Mary states that she is objecting to John appearing on the roll due to his not being old enough.

It is serious to object to someone. The *Organic Law* states that a person making an objection must give a 4 Kina deposit. If the objection is found

to require investigation, the 4 Kina is refunded.

If someone objects to your name, your ARO will serve you with a notice. You will have the right to appeal through the ARO.

SPECIAL NOTE

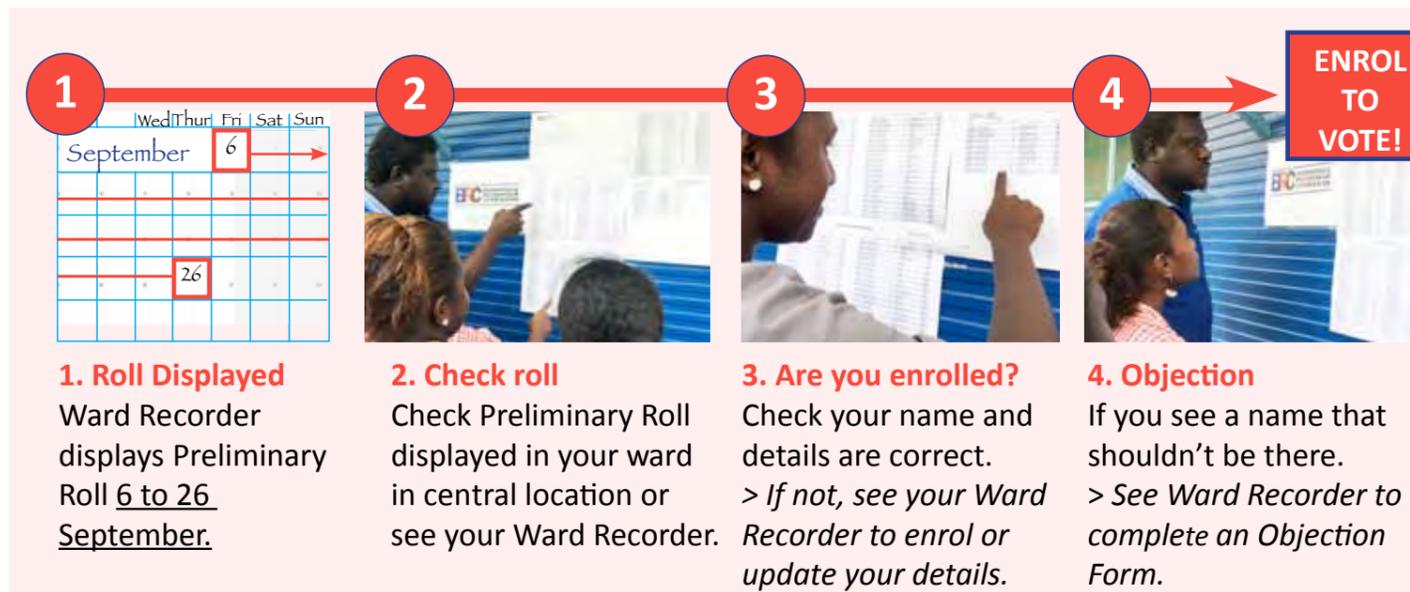
Bougainvilleans reaching 18 years of age on or before 23 November 2019, the date polling begins, should use this time to enrol. Do not wait until polling day!

Where will the Roll be?

The Ward Recorder will display the Preliminary Referendum Roll in a central location in each ward - until 26 September.

What happens next?

After display, the BRC will update the Roll to produce the final Referendum Roll. Remember - if your name is not on the Referendum Roll you will not be able to vote in the Referendum.



FAQS

Frequently asked questions

Why can non-Bougainvilleans living in Bougainville vote?

The Bougainville Peace Agreement, in section 315, says that all people who can vote in PNG national elections in Bougainville can vote in the referendum. This includes Bougainvilleans and non-Bougainvillean PNG citizens who have lived in the same place in Bougainville for at least six months before the date they enrol to vote.

Why can Bougainvilleans living outside Bougainville vote?

The two Governments agreed the criteria for enrolment for non-resident Bougainvilleans, again this was required by the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Does my enrolment receipt mean I can vote?

No. An enrolment receipt is not proof of enrolment and will not be accepted during polling. You must have your name on the final Referendum Roll to vote. This is because your name may have been successfully objected to during the public display period.

I enrolled after 2 August, but my name is not on the Preliminary Roll?

Phase 2 enrolment ended in August. If you have enrolled at a Regional Centre or recently during a special event after 2 August, your name may not have been included in data entry. However your name **will** appear on the final Referendum Roll.