

Social and Spiritual Development Strand
Social Science

Unit 2: Politics and Government

Module 2.4 Elections, Parties and Pressure Groups



Student Support Material

Acknowledgements

Materials written and compiled by Francis Mahap (MTC), Lena Rifi (SBTC) and Sue Lauer (PASTEP).

In consultation with:

Helen Walangu	PNGEI
Aloisia Maradangoi	Balob Teachers College, Lae
William Laisut	OLSH Teachers College, Kabaleo
Matei Yass	Gaulim Teachers College
Michael Homingu	Holy Trinity Teachers College, Mt Hagen
Louise Aitsi	Holy Trinity Teachers College, Mt Hagen
William Umil	Dauli Teachers College, Tari
Baro Pari	National Department of Education

Layout and diagrams supported by Nick Lauer.

Date: 5 April 2002



Primary and Secondary Teacher Education Project

Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID)
GRM International

Papua New Guinea-Australia Development Cooperation Program

Unit outline

Unit 2 Politics and Government	2.1	Introducing Politics and Government (Core)
	2.2	Government in PNG (Core)
	2.3	Leadership (Optional)
	2.4	Elections, Parties and Pressure groups (Optional)

Icons



Read or research



Write or summarise



Activity or discussion

Table of contents

Module 2.4: Elections, Parties and Pressure Groups	1
<i>Objectives</i>	<i>1</i>
Section 1: Elections.....	2
Topic 1: The Electoral System	2
Topic 2: The Electoral Commission.....	4
Topic 3: Electoral issues	6
<i>Bill on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Party preference voting system.....</i>	<i>13</i>
Section 2: Political Parties	14
<i>What is a political party?.....</i>	<i>14</i>
Topic 4: Political parties in PNG.....	14
Section 3: Policies.....	17
Topic 5: What is a policy?	17
<i>Party policies</i>	<i>17</i>
Topic 6: Public opinion	18
<i>Controlling public opinion.....</i>	<i>19</i>
Topic 7: Party policies in PNG.....	21
Section 4: Pressure Groups	22
Topic 8: What is a pressure group?	22
<i>Trade unions.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Non-government organizations</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Women’s groups</i>	<i>23</i>
Topic 9: International pressure groups.....	24
<i>Amnesty International</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Greenpeace.....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Friends of the Earth.....</i>	<i>25</i>
Topic 10: Pressure groups in PNG	26
References	28
Glossary.....	29

Module 2.4: Elections, Parties and Pressure Groups

A regulated electoral process and the existence of a range of political parties help ensure democratic principles are adhered to in a country. As citizens of Papua New Guinea, future teachers need to be knowledgeable about election procedures and the roles of the various political parties that form governments. They also need to be aware of the pressure exerted by international, national and local groups to achieve a range of outcomes for themselves and the communities they represent.

Objectives

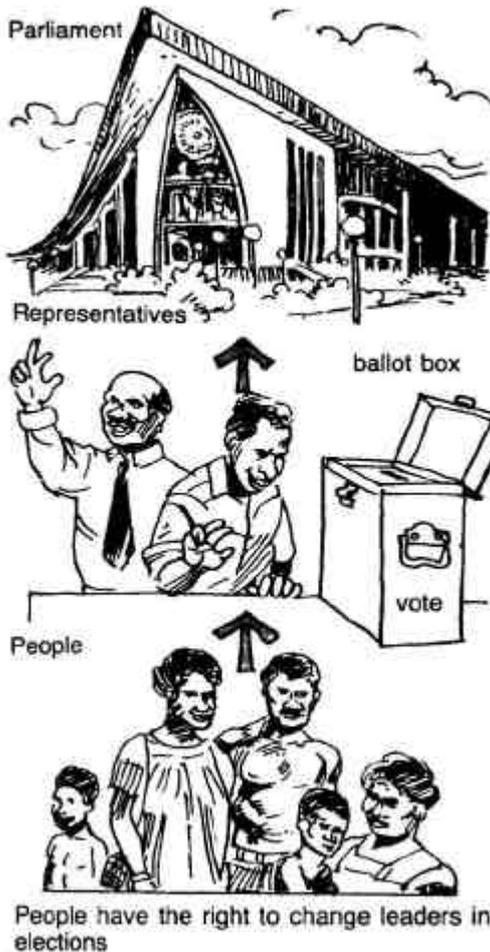
By the end of this module students will be able to

- Recognise, appreciate and accept the political values and practices of people within PNG and elsewhere
- Determine factors influencing elections and policies
- Develop thinking skills to enable informed decisions and positive attitudes
- Discuss and define the role of institutions such as the electoral commission
- Analyse the performance of major political parties
- Respect different viewpoints and belief systems
- Understand the electoral process and contribute to the running of elections if possible
- Apply a range of skills such as observing, measuring and recording data, using data to explain, draw conclusions, and make predictions
- Identify pressure groups and their impact on people and government
- Compare and contrast the policies of different pressure groups
- Identify significant issues which involve both government and pressure groups
- Describe the interrelationships between governments and pressure groups

Section 1: Elections

Topic 1: The Electoral System

Voting is an important democratic right



Elections to choose members of the National Parliament are held every 5 years, unless Parliament decides to hold them earlier. Voters get 2 ballots. One is to pick a member to represent the entire province. The other is to pick a member to represent a smaller district, known as an **open electorate**. The people who get the most votes win the election and represent their constituents in the national government. Voting is non-compulsory.

Every citizen of PNG who is 18 years or older is eligible to vote in national elections. The law requires that people sign up on voter's rolls in their district well before an election.

From: Government in Papua New Guinea

Voting has been quite high compared with most countries where it is not mandatory. The per cent of those eligible that voted were:

72.3% in 1964	68.9% in 1977
63.0% in 1968	66.3% in 1982
60.0% in 1972	72.9% in 1987

Candidates for Parliament must be citizens of PNG; be 25 years of age or older, and have been born in the electorate, or have lived in it for the past 2 years. They also must be of sound mind, not be under sentence of imprisonment for more than 9 months, not have been dismissed from government office for violations of the Leadership Code in the past 3 years, and not have been convicted in the past 9 months for violation of election laws.

The candidates give speeches, make promises (campaign) and meet the people. On election day, all Papua New Guineans vote in secret and place the ballot (voting) paper in a locked box. The ballot box is sent for counting in tally rooms. The candidates with the most votes represent their province or district as Members of Parliament (MPs) in the National Government.

The national parliament is currently elected on a **first-past-the-post** system in which the voter is allowed to mark just one preference for the most favoured candidate by placing an x or tick in the box opposite the name of the candidate. The candidate with the highest number of votes is successful and there is no limit to the possible number of candidates.

This system is also used in the United Kingdom. In practice, this means that MPs are frequently elected with less than 10% of the total vote, which mean that 90 per cent of the voters wanted somebody else.

This not only leads to widespread disenchantment at election time but also to corruption and tribalism. For instance, it is possible for a candidate to split the electorate's vote along tribal lines by encouraging representatives of each tribe in a constituency to stand. The candidate would then concentrate on ensuring the loyalty of their tribe and perhaps picking up a few votes here and there by spreading a little bit of 'financial goodwill'. Such unstable arrangements also mean that very few MPs survive more than one electoral term, leaving the parliament short in experience and continuity. In the 1997 election, over half the sitting members were not re-elected, including two former prime ministers and nine cabinet ministers

In Australia and some other countries, instead of 'first past the post', there is **preferential voting**. A candidate will have distributed to him or her, the votes of the candidate who has the next smaller number of votes. These are the preference votes that bring up the percentage of the winning candidate. This system is said to ensure that the member who wins the seat has a majority of the votes and to be fairer than 'first past the post'.

2.4 Activity 1

Examine the rules of your college SRC. Who is eligible to stand for office? Who is eligible to vote? How is the voting organised? How are the votes counted?

What changes (if any) would you recommend for the conduct of SRC elections?

Topic 2: The Electoral Commission

The Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission began in 1961. Since September 16, 1975, the Electoral Commission has supervised five general elections, not to mention the numerous by-elections resulting from resignations, deaths or dismissals of members of Parliament by Leadership Tribunals. It has managed the several hundred voters of the first Legislative Assembly in 1964 through to facing over 2.3 million voters in the country's fifth general elections in 1997.

The Electoral Commissioner is a constitutional officer who is appointed for a fixed number of years. This fixed term is meant to keep him/her free of political control. The Electoral Commission staff make up the voter rolls, oversee the voting, count the ballots and announce the winners. The Commission decides where people will vote and on what days. (Many countries do their voting all in one day. In PNG, elections can last several weeks, as trained election teams go from one village to the next

Losing candidates can challenge unfair election practices in court. Common complaints are that the ballots were not counted properly or that the winner had not lived in the district long enough. These complaints are heard by a National Court judge sitting as the Court of Disputed Returns. The person named as winner by the Electoral Commission is seated as a Member of Parliament while the court hears the case. If the court rules that he or she is not qualified for office, the person is removed from Parliament and a new election is held. If the court finds that votes have been miscounted, the winner of the revised count is seated. In 1987, complaints were filed by candidates for 41 of the 109 seats. Electoral Commission decisions were upheld in almost all cases.

Special elections are held if a Member of Parliament dies or leaves office for any reason more than 6 months before the end of Parliament's term. These are called **by-elections**.



Hon. William (Bill) Skate, M.P.
The Prime Minister
The PNG National Government
WAIGANI
National Capital District

My Dear Prime Minister,

It is my pleasurable duty to forward to Parliament, through you, my Report on the 1997 national election which was held in June, and which has resulted in the convening of the Sixth National Parliament since Independence.

Section One of the Report summarises some problems that continue to plague the conduct of elections in the country, and the effort by the Electoral Commission and other state agencies, such as the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, to deal with them.

Section Two analyses the results of the elections with a view to bringing to the attention of Members of Parliament aspects of the results that do not sit well with democracy and effective representation, and which could, over time, affect the legitimacy of governments, unless measures are taken to reverse the trends.

Towards that objective of strengthening the democratic credentials of our political system and refurbished the legitimacy of governing institutions and their actions, Section Three of the Report makes several recommendations for the consideration and appropriate legislative action by the new House. It is hoped that parliament will move to make the necessary laws in the first year or two of its life so as to give the Electoral Commission and the general public the opportunity to digest the changes long before the next national elections in 2002.

In the past, several necessary pieces of legislation to strengthen the integrity of the electoral process have either not been passed at all, or they have been done at the eleventh hour, very close to the conduct of elections and have thus contributed to the difficulties faced by the Electoral Commission and to some confusion among the public.

I would like to take this opportunity of the submission of my Report to make a few public acknowledgments of gratitude for the support I have obtained in my position as Electoral Commissioner. First, I will to thank the Staff of the Electoral Commission, successive Returning Officers, polling officials and casual staff, who have worked so tirelessly to make it possible for the Commission to conduct elections with the rate of success that has been achieved in the very difficult Papua New Guinea environment. Successive Prime Ministers must also be thanked for having been most accommodating with our funding requests. Similar, I must thank successive Police Commissioners and Defence Force Commanders for their cooperative attitudes.

Finally, for this year's election, I am sure the whole nation joins me in thanking the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and the distinguished members of the Commonwealth Observer Group, for their most appreciated input into the election process. It is my sincere hope that Parliament will give the most careful considerations to the observations which may be contained in the Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group.

The people of Papua New Guinea, and good governance, can only be winners if Members of Parliament study with care and attention and act appropriately on whatever recommendations that such an experienced, disinterested and impartial team might make in its Report.

Yours Sincerely,

REUBEN T. KAIULO, MBE

ELECTORAL COMMISSIONER.

 **2.4 Activity 2**

Mr Kaiulo suggests there were problems with the conduct and results of the 1997 elections. Survey people in the local community to find out what problems they experienced during the election and their opinion of the outcome.

Topic 3: Electoral issues

Parliament's job is not just to recognise but also to do something about the fact that aspects of our system and our practice of politics have not worked fairly, or efficiently or accountably, in the best interest of all people. Our current system is inherently unstable. When the political system is unstable, the nation suffers and development is impeded.

The Morauta Government introduced to Parliament the Bill on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates which was in two parts and required an amendment to the constitution and subsequently to be made an organic law. It required passage by two sessions of Parliament before it became a law. This amendment bill was the most important constitutional change any Parliament has made since Independence. There were two votes, one in August and another in October 2000.

Bill on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates

The main features of the Organic Law (and the necessary Constitutional amendments) are:

Registration

All political parties must be registered. To qualify for registration, a party must be incorporated as an association with the Investment Promotion Authority; it must have a president, secretary, treasurer and public officer and, where it is represented in Parliament, a parliamentary leader.

Under Section 26 of the Constitution, executive officers of registered political parties are subject to the Leadership Code. The party must also give information about its registered office and its finances and it must not have discriminatory or divisive policies that seek to challenge national unity. Registrations are approved by a board, consisting of the Clerk of Parliament, the Electoral Commissioner, the Chairperson of the National Council of Churches and the National Council of Women. This board also manages party funding.

Party democracy

When a party submits an application for registration, it must lodge its constitution as well. One of the minimum requirements is that the party must have financial members, its members must be free to choose their executive at periodic elections in which all members have a right to vote, all members have a right to stand for election to party executive posts. Members of Parliament who are members of the party must be financial members of their parties as well. In addition, where a party is represented in Parliament, the choice of a parliamentary party leader must follow similar rules. The parliamentary party leader must be elected by all Members.

Funding

Registered political parties must be funded from the national purse. But this funding is made on the condition there are checks and balances so that no one party (for example, the party in power) can manipulate the funding. Registered parties are funded annually. A party will receive from the central fund K10, 000 per MP per year. MPs will not receive funding directly from the central fund. Unregistered parties and registered parties that do not have MPs in Parliament will not receive funding. MPs who do not belong to registered parties will not receive funding.

Citizens and non-citizens can contribute directly to political parties and to the central fund. Contributions to the central fund are unlimited. The contribution to a party is limited to K500, 000 per year per party per contributor. Contributions made directly to a party or a candidate must be declared within 30 days of the contribution being made. The declaration must be lodged with the registrar. This declaration is in addition to the financial returns which registered parties are required to submit each year. Disclosure must be made by both the contributor and the registered party that receives the contribution. Similar rules apply to contributions to election candidates.

Financial returns

Registered parties must prepare and file financial returns each year. These returns must set out their income (including sources) and their expenditure. A party that fails to provide these details or files misleading or false returns will not receive funding from the central fund, and the party and its officials can be prosecuted.

Women candidates

The Organic Law recognises that women are poorly represented in Parliament. To encourage more women MPs, the law allows a party that supports women candidates to recover up to 75% of their expenditure on women candidates from the state. Two points are important. First, the reimbursement is made to the political party, not the candidate herself, and the party must file proof of the expenditure, by producing receipts, etc. Second, only women candidates who win or receive at least 10% of the votes from their electorates will entitle their sponsoring party to recover its expenses.

Forming government

Any party with a simple majority of MPs after a national election will be invited to form government. Even if the majority might be as few as one MP more than the next largest political party, that party must be asked to form government. If there are two or more parties with an equal number of MPs in their parties, each will be invited to nominate an MP for the position of Prime Minister. Two parties that have an equal number of MPs are invited to form government together may agree to form a coalition and nominate one candidate for Prime Minister and form government. Or one of them might gather support from other parties and form government.

Whatever option is adopted, a party or parties asked to form government will be the only party or parties qualified to nominate a Prime Minister at the first instance. Where the person or people nominated for Prime Minister by the party or parties invited to form government fail(s) to secure a majority of votes, nominations will then be thrown open to anyone and Parliament must elect a Prime Minister in accordance with Standing Orders. Independent MPs will not be allowed to join a registered party until after the election of a Prime Minister.

Defections

Two restrictions are placed on MPs who are elected to Parliament as party members from leaving their party. The first restriction is that an MP who has been elected as a party member must not join another party during the term of Parliament or leave the party and become an independent. The second restriction is that MPs elected with party support or endorsement must vote in accordance with the party position on the following matters: a vote for the appointment of a Prime Minister; vote for the National budget and a vote to amend the constitution. In all other matters, MPs will be free to vote against their party position. MPs who disagree with their party position on these three matters may abstain but they cannot vote against the party position.

Two sets of penalties are to be imposed on an MP who breaks the two restrictions explained above. The first is that an MP who resigns from a party must have good reasons for doing so. The Ombudsman Commission will investigate and may refer such a matter to a Leadership Tribunal, and if the reasons given for resignation are not good the tribunal can recommend that the MP be dismissed. If dismissal is not recommended, the MP must face the following other penalties: he or she must refund all election expenses incurred by the party; and he or she cannot hold a ministerial, vice-ministerial or committee chairmanship position for the term of Parliament. He or she cannot stand as a candidate for Prime Minister.

*(Source: adapted from **Post-Courier**, 10 May 2001)*

2.4 Activity 3

Why was the Political Integrity Bill introduced?

Why do defections occur during any parliamentary term in a political party?

Under this system, how will the members form the new government?

The following newspaper articles all make reference to the 2002 election. Read each letter and discuss the expectations of each writer and the issues they raise.

Politics hinders development

Consecutive national governments have spent most of their time, effort and investment on politics rather than development and services, Chimbu Governor Fr Louis Ambane said yesterday. Fr Ambane said governments over the years had forgotten development for the betterment of the peoples' lives and set politics as their main role. He told the Post-Courier that because politics was played very heavily, sometimes regardless of morals and ethics, it had become a stumbling block to development

Governor Ambane said in many parts of the country infrastructure and other vital services were deteriorating because the Government did not release the RAP funds, for the last couple of years. Fr Ambane said people in the country were expecting to see some form of development and services provided by the current government. "Politics should go together with delivery of services and development," he said.

Post Courier 24 May 2001

Bishop: Politics benefit few

THE head of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of PNG (ELCPNG) Bishop Dr Wesley Kigasung yesterday fired a broadside on the recent political events, claiming they were only for the benefit of politicians and those in power...

Dr Kigasung, speaking on behalf of the ELCPNG Bishops Council, said the church had been observing the developments on the political front with "a great deal of scepticism and questions. "The marriage of parties and formation of new parties are events that only excite those who are closely attached to it. I for one do not find it exciting, inspiring nor motivating," he said. He said he was not convinced that the political marriages would last, adding that the movements were only to 'save the necks' of leaders in lead up to the challenges they would face at the up-coming national elections.

Dr Kigasung was also critical of Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta's assertion that the recent drive to boost the numbers of the People's Democratic Party was for national interest and political stability. "How many times have we heard such claims and yet every time these phrases were expressed, they were done after or as part of reshuffles and sackings.

He said the ELCPNG Bishop's Council resolved to educate the church followers to be aware of the problems faced by the country and help to find solutions. The church would also commit itself to educating its members on the up-coming national elections by ensuring they voted for good leaders.

Dr Kigasung said aspiring politicians must be prepared to answer the question: "How are you going to solve the problem of increasing social injustice in the country and stop the increase in the rape of our motherland and its resources?" "We do not need simple political jargon. We have heard those since independence and our people are still starved of real services in the villages. A new effort must be made to answer the question," Dr Kigasung said.

Adapted from: Post-Courier, 24 May 2001

Protest through the ballot box

In my view, what the IMF and World Bank are offering is a possible cure to our country's economic illnesses. While the nature of their assistance and indeed the attached conditions may be unsettling to our collective sense of patriotism because of its implied threat to a key aspect of our identity, the fact remains that we need their help and we need it quickly. The gravity of our country's deplorable economic situation is evident everywhere. You only need to pick up a newspaper on any given day to find within its pages another gloomy item on the subject. What the government is being forced to do now is purely a result of their own mismanagement of the economy.

If the UPNG students want to blame someone for the seriousness of our situation, I say, don't blame the IMF or the World Bank~ blame all the politicians in Parliament. Both sides of the House have been in power and both have had a hand in the demise of our nation's stature. Personally, if I could channel my loathing, derision and anger into some positive energy at the downright incompetence displayed by our politicians, I'd lift a mountain and slam it down on Parliament Haus. Politicians, both past and present have neglected to discharge their most sacred obligation to the people whom they represent. The obligation I refer to is that of accountability.

Just look at the truly infantile way they shift blame amongst themselves for past and present wrongs. None of them are willing to stand up and accept blame or better yet, work together by putting aside rancour to provide effective solutions for the myriad problems we presently face. The troubles besetting our young nation are a direct consequence of this serious dereliction of duty.

I too will protest, but I intend to do my protesting where I feel it will be most effective - at the next General Elections. I am going to vote for a person who is humble enough to know that the role he or she will play once elected into Parliament is that of a representative. It would be a fallacy to assume that the present bunch of parliamentarians, with one or two exceptions, will ever change their mentality towards their jobs and most importantly, the people.

As a citizen I have the power to remove a 'leader' through a simple vote for someone else. I relish the opportunity to do so in light of the present state of affairs. I pray that more people who read this letter will do the same things so that a change for the better is realised for our embattled country.

Ian B Taukuro - Port Moresby

Adapted from: *The National*, 4 July 2001

PDM, come out with your plans for PNG

WHAT is PDM's hidden agenda for PNG? Is it to make this country poorer or what?

This question needs to be asked because most of what PDM is doing is simply making PNG and its citizens poorer.

The following are some of what PDM is doing to make PNG poorer:

1. Disposing of our State assets through privatisation to pay for World Bank loans, loans which will be used to import machinery, machinery which will be used to exploit our resources including forests and minerals for exports, and the export revenue will be shifted overseas by their foreign owners;

2. Denial of wage increase for our grassroots workers so that they can still remain as slaves for the foreign plantation owners. These plantation owners are transferring their export revenues to overseas.

3. The wholesale suspension of provincial governments in the Highlands. These provincial governments are fighting for just entitlements from their natural resources on behalf of their landowners, people and the provinces.

4. The lack of attention to employment creation to reduce the increasing number of unemployed people in PNG.

5. The lack of attention to industrial expansion to boost import substitution, employment opportunities, transfer of skills etc.

6. Lack of attention to the money grabbing banks which are frequently increasing their service fees without improving the quality of their services to their banking customers.

7. The negligence of national highways in other regions while concentrating more resources in the already well developed National Capital District. Hence the gap between the rich and the poor is expanding.

8. The increase in the motor vehicle registration fees will make it hard to transport goods and services and hence making it hard for our people to earn any cash income.

It is over to you PDM guys to tell the people of Papua New Guinea your real plans so that we put the right people in office at the coming elections.

Impoverished Citizen – Waigani



Post-Courier, 19 March 2001

Please, enough of party politics

It is sickening to start reading again about politicians and their game of political party challenges before the national election time. We the silent majority have had enough of all your party politics and call for all you leaders to have a change of heart and attitude now and work together for the common good of all.

I appeal to all my fellow Sepiks to think seriously now about who you will elect in the general election. All you thinking, hardworking, humble, honest and patient Sepiks, now is the time to vote for change. Must we continue like this for another five years? Look at our province. There are no major changes in the past 10 to 15 years that we can see, talk about and be proud of.

Fellow Sepiks, correct me if I am wrong. In all our district headquarters, most important infrastructure services like roads and bridges, classrooms and teacher's houses, police barracks and offices, medical staff houses and health services, have deteriorated, over the past two terms of previous and current provincial and national members. A casual glance at our society today sees that so many things are not right.

We, the simple Sepiks, have a duty to perform and that is to re-educate our young and old eligible voters to honestly choose God fearing leaders in the coming election to lead us into the new millennium. The old millennium is gone and so must the old leaders go.

The challenge is for you leaders to leave behind party politics, family politics and individual politics, and work together as God fearing Melanesians in running this country the Melanesian PNG way.

Masam 58 – Bulolo Morobe

Adapted from: *Post-Courier*, 19 March 2001



2.4 Activity 4

Impoverished Citizen has listed 8 problems currently experienced in PNG. You are members of PDM. Brainstorm party policies for the next election to address the issues raised and the criticism of your party.

Read the information provided about preferential and party preference voting systems. This activity could be done in groups, with each group completing one section of the chart. Draw up a chart similar to the one below to compare aspects of these with the 'first past the post system'.

	First past the post	Preferential voting	Party preference voting
How it works			
Advantages			
Disadvantages			

Party preference voting system

Our electoral system is overdue for reform

THERE seems considerable support in the country for the claim that our electoral system is no longer serving our interest and is overdue for reform. For reasons of easy acceptance, a preferential system is generally regarded as our best option. Unfortunately, there is a dilemma.

The simpler forms of limited preferential voting, say marking three or even five preferences, may have little effect on the current representational distortion resulting from overwhelming numbers of candidates, while more complex ballot marking requirements obliging a voter to give, say his top 10 or 15 preferences, is going to create difficulties for both voters and electoral officers. And a likely high percentage of spoiled ballot papers ultimately defeats the object of introducing the reform in the first place.

With a party preference voting system (PPV) there is only one preference. On the ballot paper two lists of names appear. One list contains the names of candidates and the other, names of parties. Two necessary conditions for parties to fulfil if they wish to stand for a particular seat are: they are an officially recognised and properly constituted national political party and they have their own endorsed candidates on the candidates list.

The voter is asked to indicate:

- * His/her choice from the candidates list (This is the primary candidate vote), and
- * His/her choice from the party list (this is the alternative party preference vote).

If the first count (of candidate votes) fails to produce a winner with at least 20 per cent of the votes, then the party preference votes of all, except the highest scoring candidate, are distributed to parties. If no party exceeds the total of the leading candidate, then he/she is declared winner. Should one or more parties exceed the winning candidate's total, then the latter's party preferences are also distributed and the party now emerging with the highest total is declared winner - but declared to be so in the name of its officially endorsed candidate on the ballot list.

I have suggested 20% of the vote be made the minimum total for a candidate to win on the first vote for three reasons:

- * to avoid too great a break with the past;
- * to favour popular candidates, and
- * to lessen the force of arguments from those who, for whatever reason, want to retain first past the post.

But so low a required winning minimum also shows up how unrepresentative in effect our current system is. If, on the contrary, you think 20% is too generous, recall statistics from the 1997 election – 68 members were sent to Parliament with 20% and less of the vote turnout for their seat, and of these 41 members had 15% or less. If no reform is forthcoming the next election is likely to see 80 members and more returned with less than 20% of the vote in their seats.

Sir Anthony Sigaru Adapted from: *Post-Courier*, 1 November 1999

Section 2: Political Parties

What is a political party?

A political party is an organisation with particular political beliefs and policies and the aim of putting them into operation. Parties provide the opportunity for people of similar attitudes and ideals to meet and develop these views and establish policies. They also enable party members to work together to gain support for their ideas. A party may nominate a candidate for parliament, and, if enough seats are gained, form the government.

Topic 4: Political parties in PNG

Candidates with similar ideas or policies join together into political parties. Members of Parliament who do not belong to any political party are called **independents**. Political parties have been important in PNG politics since Michael Somare and others formed the Pangu Pati in 1967.

In contrast to other countries, there are only small differences in the guiding ideals of most PNG parties. Although the party members and the independents may disagree on some matters, most support:

- Agricultural development
- The idea that every Papua New Guinean has the right to a similar lifestyle
- The idea that PNG must become self-reliant and not depend so much on foreign aid

Party policies don't mean that much to most voters, who seem to make their choices on the basis of clan, material rewards, or personality. In the 1987 national elections, independents (people without any party alliance) won 41 per cent of the total vote and 24 of the 109 seats in Parliament. They played a decisive role in the formation of the Wingti Coalition Government. However, most of them joined parties after that to get more influence.

Pangu (Papua New Guinea Union) has been the most successful party. In 1982 it won 52 seats-only 3 short of enough to form a government by itself. Later, however, dissatisfied members split off into new parties, and Pangu won only 26 seats in 1987. Generally, Pangu emphasises business and industrial development, health and education services. Among its founders are Sir Maori Kiki and Sir Ebia Olewale.



Four other parties date back to the early 1970s:

- **Melanesian Alliance**, led by Father John Momis, is the 'conscience' party. It has championed provincial government and individual rights. Other leaders have been John Kaputin and Bernard Narokobi.
- **National Party**, led by Michael Mel, has a conservative, business orientation. Its early leaders, Sir Thomas Kavali and Sir Iambakey Okuk, were among the minority of Highlanders who pushed for early independence.
- **People's Progress Party**, led by Sir Julius Chan, has a business orientation. Warren Dutton was another founder.

- **United Party** also has a business orientation. Its early leaders-Tai Abel, Sinake Giregire, and Anton Parau, were Highlanders who wanted much slower moves towards independence.



From: Government in Papua New Guinea

In PNG, no party has ever achieved a clear majority in Parliament, so several parties have joined together (negotiated a coalition) to form the governments since independence in 1975. In the 1987 elections, independents won 41% of the vote. Gaining their allegiance was essential if a party leader was to make any headway in the Parliamentary chamber. One of the mechanisms that has kept coalitions and ministers in power is the 'lock-up' or 'camp'. In the days immediately after an election, the Parliament and Port Moresby was empty of politicians. They were lured away to an island resort or remote 'camp' where they couldn't be 'got at' by the opposition. Here the political groupings were cemented, at least temporarily. It was a version of a traditional big man's feast.

Party	Date	Leader
PNG National Party Inc.	1997	Paul Pora
Peoples Resources Awareness Party	1997	Michael Uvilio
National Alliance Inc.	1997	Sir Michael Somare
Hausman Pati	1997	Waim Tokam
People's Action Party Inc.	1987	Ted Diro
Milne Bay Patry Inc.	1996	Simon Munmurit
Pangu Pati Inc.	1972	Chris Haiveta
People's Democratic Movement	1986	Pais Wingti
United Party Inc.	1996	
Melanesian Labour Party Inc.	1996	Paul Mondia
Peoples National Congress	1996	Bill Skate
Movement For Greater Autonomy	1996	Steven Pokawin
Peoples Progress Party	1976	Sir Julius Chan
Liberal Party Inc.	1991	Thomas Pupun
Peoples Solidarity Party	1992	Kala Swokin
Christian Country Party	1990	Avusi Tanao
Christian Democratic Party Inc.		Goma - Chairman
Melanesian Alliance Party	1977	John Momis
Peoples Unity Party Inc.	1995	David Unagi
Papua New Guinea First	1997	John Gundu

Parties registered for the 1997 election

 **2.4 Activity 5**

*How many parties listed above are registered for the 2002 election?
Discuss why some parties have disappeared from the political scene.*

*Try to identify one policy associated with at least ten of the parties
registered for the 2002 election.*

*Divide the class into three groups. Each group is to form a political party
with a name, logo, party leader, five election policies and an election
poster.*

Section 3: Policies

Topic 5: What is a policy?

A policy is the publicly stated aim and ideals of a political party (or other organization).

The term has a number of political meanings. The most important is that it represents the party's fundamental philosophical and long-term aims. Another meaning of the term is the party's attitude to one or more topical issues and proposals for action in the near future. Policies are often presented in fine-sounding but vague terms.

Party policies

In democratic countries, political parties perform several important tasks.

- They select candidates to run for public office
- They help organize the government
- They provide opposition to the party in power
- They raise the funds needed to conduct election campaigns
- They inform voters about public affairs and about problems that need government action

One of the political party's most important functions is to prepare a program or set of policies. They propose to put this program into action for the benefit of the country, if they gain or retain power at the next election. These policies are usually the subject of research and discussion within the party. They can concern almost any matter which the party considers important--such as conservation, control of public services, defence, economic plans, education, energy supplies, foreign policy, or the ownership of land and major industries. Such policies are sometimes discussed and voted on at a general meeting of party members. Sometimes, party policies are published as a manifesto, or as a plan for a certain number of years ahead, to present the arguments that the party's candidates will use to persuade voters to vote for them. Parties also devise special 'election policies' for each general election.

Issue	Coalition Policy	Labor Policy
National competition policy and deregulation	Strengthen the public interest test	Strengthen the public interest test
Telstra	Complete privatization of Telstra once service levels are met	Will not allow further sell-off
Petrol	Removed automatic price increases for fuel excise	Fuel tax enquiry to look at effect of government policies on fuel prices outside the cities
Rural services	Increase in Budget for rural nursing and \$1.6 billion over four years for road recovery	Rebuild public health system, expand university places and have a greater role in regional development

Party policies on major issues in Australian politics

Topic 6: Public opinion

Opinion polls

Public opinion refers to the opinions or views of people in a community or country on issues of public interest or concern. Such issues may deal with any subject that is open to differing beliefs and attitudes.

Elections of political leaders are one important way the public can express its opinion about a candidate. Expressions of opinion may also influence politicians, but such expressions also may be disregarded because public opinion lasts only a short time, is emotionally charged, and usually represents the more visible and vocal portion of the population. The balance of the population, often called the **silent majority**, does not express its views as regularly or as visibly.

A public opinion poll is a survey to find out the attitudes, beliefs, or opinions of a large number of people. The population covered may include millions of individuals, but only a small number of them are actually questioned. If they have been properly chosen, their opinions will usually accurately reflect those of the entire group.

Polls are conducted throughout the world, but they are most frequently taken in countries with a democratic form of government. Politicians use polls to help them plan their election campaigns and keep track of their strength with the voters. Polls help elected officials make decisions by telling them how people feel about various problems and issues. Such polls ask people's opinions on educational programmes, medical services, transportation, and other subjects.

The process of forming opinion

People's values and attitudes influence the opinions they hold. Some people are well informed or make an effort to become so, and others make quick judgments based on casual impressions. Some people act quite independently. Other people are influenced mainly by the views of their friends and associates.

Political opinion is made for the most part by or for the political parties. Even the government in power, whether local or national, feels obliged to create a public opinion favourable to itself so that its programme may be carried out.

Some individuals, especially celebrities, frequently have much more influence than others do in the process of opinion formation. Events also may have a great effect on the forming of opinion if they are dramatic enough, near enough, or personal enough to attract the attention of large numbers of individuals.

Speeches, books, and pamphlets were the principal means of expressing opinion until the 1800's. Then newspapers appeared in large numbers and soon developed wide circulations. The political cartoon is a powerful tool for expressing and moulding opinion in the press. The cartoonist can caricature prominent people and ideas, and thus can often express a point of view more bluntly and much more vigorously than it could be expressed in writing. Radio and television have supplemented rather than replaced the newspaper and the film as carriers of news and opinion. The older means of communication have time to give a more studied, fuller

version of events than can the immediate reporting to which radio and television are best adapted.



Schools and other educational institutions have great importance among the agencies of opinion. Their importance lies partly in their ability to develop basic attitudes and points of view that have a great bearing on the opinions people will form about the issues that arise from day to day. They provide knowledge about social, economic, political, and other aspects of life, and equip people with the skills necessary to interpret information about current developments.

2.4 Activity 6

Conduct an opinion poll on an important issue for people in your area. As well as finding out how people feel and think, find out how they formed their opinion.

Collect cartoons which deal with political issues. What opinions are being expressed in the cartoons?

How and why have people formed opinions about issues such as terrorism or illegal immigrants?

Most constitutions provide specific freedoms, including freedom of the press (newspapers and other media), freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly (political gatherings). In democratic countries, people are encouraged to make their opinions known through election campaigns and referendums. Public meetings, marches, and peaceful demonstrations may be held.

Controlling public opinion

Propaganda and censorship are the most widespread governmental controls over public opinion.

- **Propaganda** is one-sided communication designed to influence people's thinking and actions. A television commercial or a poster urging people to vote for a political candidate might be propaganda, depending on its method of persuasion. With propaganda, the government seeks to make people accept its programme and policies by persuading them that only such a programme will keep them out of danger, or win a war, or meet some other emergency.
- **Censorship** is the control of what people may say or hear, write or read, or see or do. Censorship is a negative control over public opinion. Censorship is most common where the government controls the newspapers, television, and other means of communication. It increases the effectiveness of propaganda because the government can silence people who contradict its official views.

Nearly all governments, including democratic ones, use propaganda to win support from other nations and to promote desired behaviour among their own citizens. For example, government propaganda might urge people to support certain policies or to oppose foreign political systems.

Whenever a government or a private group feels endangered by free expression, it may turn to censorship. Every society, including democratic ones, has had some kind of censorship when its rulers have felt it would benefit the nation—or themselves. Democracies do not officially permit political censorship. However, many democratic governments try to discourage the expression of certain radical ideas. For example, various laws prohibit speeches or writings that might lead to violence.

Media urged to stand firm, alone

The media Council and industry have been urged to be vigilant against any moves to erode media freedom in the country ...

Former newspaper editor and political aide now turned political activist ... called on the media council to urgently address recent cases in which media freedom appears to have been challenged by those in authority and make public findings. Three specific instances he wants investigated are the recent referral of the Post Courier editor, Oseah Philemon to the parliamentary Privileges Committee, the attempt by senior political aides to have the Catholic Bishops Conference sack the general manager and publisher of Word Publishing's group of publications, Anna Solomon, and this week's suspension of the national broadcasting Commission's news editor Joseph Ealadona, allegedly for allowing broadcasting of stories 'displeasing' to those in authority.

Post-Courier, 30 August 2001

2.4 Activity 7

Examine newspapers or media reports for other examples of political censorship or propaganda

Topic 7: Party policies in PNG

Reject parties with no clear policies

As the small people of this country struggle daily to survive they must be heartened to know that about 60 groups of aspiring politicians are on the way to pull them from the depths of despair by paying their K10000 and registering yet another political party in the hope of getting their noses in the trough of the new central fund created by the Political Integrity Act.... Registering the party is their democratic right, but among the fanfare of launches and newspaper adverts has one of them outlined its party manifesto? Have any of them been able to print their blueprint for PNG's survival? People of PNG, reject all those parties with no clear policies. Reject those who can show no programs which will improve your daily lot. Reject those who have failed before. Use your one vote wisely. Vote PNG.

Screaming Lord Such, Port Moresby.

Post-Courier, 22 August 2001

ADVERTISEMENT



CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY

The Christian Democratic Party Inc. (CDP), thanks all the party members and supporters and prayer warriors nationwide for standing in the gap to pray and uphold the ministry consistently since election 1997.

The National Executive of the Ministry assures you all and the general public of our commitment to remain true to our visions on launching in Goroka on 29th April 1995 to:

1. Provide Christian Leaders at all levels of Government
2. Promote Christian & democratic Principles in Governance
3. Foster and Promote National Unity in PNG
4. Support work of Christians and Christian Churches in PNG
5. Promote Christian and democratic system of Government in PNG
6. Maintain Christian Voice on the floor of Parliament

That we have done well during our first term in Parliament and are greatly encouraged about future prospects contributing to good leadership in Papua New Guinea.

CDP is a seven year Journey by Concerned Christians nationwide from all Christian churches who believe that Christ must become the common bond/uniting factor in our nation. The Party will definitely contest the coming 2002 General Elections and will hold its Party Convention in Mt Hagen from 05th-06th October 2001. The Party invites those interested to either contest or support those going to contact us soon for further information.

2.4 Activity 8

What do the letter and advertisement above indicate about party policies in PNG?

Try to identify the current policies of at least two political parties in PNG.

Invite your local MP to outline his/her party policies.

Interview local people about their needs. From their responses, form policies which could be adopted by a political party.

Section 4: Pressure Groups

Topic 8: What is a pressure group?

A group that tries to further its own interests by exerting pressure on parliamentarians or other officials is called a pressure group. During election campaigns, many organizations distribute propaganda that supports candidates who agree with their views. Between elections, organizations may also use propaganda to influence public opinion, outlining their goals on such controversial topics as abortion, civil rights, the environment, foreign policy issues, and nuclear energy.

Pressure groups may represent such varied interests as agriculture, transport, professions such as medicine and the law, or such groups as women voters or conservationists. Below are examples of material released by two pressure groups.

Corruption growing unchecked

The PNG Chamber of Mines and petroleum has said that prominent industry bodies share an 'unparalleled concern at the continuing growth of corruption, nepotism, outrageous salary packages and political horse-trading that seems to go unchecked in the country'. Mr Anderson's blunt statement, made in the light of the ongoing build-up to next year's general election, appears to be a direct challenge to political parties and politicians of all hues to clean up their act for the sake of a better PNG.

The National – 2 May 2001

Student Unions on Campus

If you begin a class next year and find the lecture theatre so crowded you have to sit on the stairs, or that Youth Allowance barely pays the rent, then your student representative council is where you find people willing to speak up on your behalf. The SRC, or student's association on each university campus works with the national union of Students to guard student's rights, as well as getting involved in campaigns affecting the wider community.

The Weekend Australian, 2001

Trade unions

Trade unions are organizations of workers that seek to improve their members' pay and working conditions. They do this by negotiating with representatives of the workers' employer in a procedure called collective bargaining. Unions also promote better health and safety standards and staff training, as well as seeking other benefits for their members such as discount on goods purchased. In most countries, trade unions are legal, and are allowed to

organize and recruit members. However, government laws regulate trade union activities in many democratic countries.

In many countries, trade unions engage in politics. Unions have generally supported socialist policies as a way of improving social conditions. Some political parties have close links with the trade union movement. Trade unions in Eastern Europe, South America, and South Africa have often led political protest and change. Governments have tried to limit trade union activity by passing restrictive laws, by banning unions altogether, or by making the unions instruments of government policy.

Non-government organizations

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) are bodies with goals to be accomplished by influencing governments. NGOs have been a feature of international politics since the middle of the 19th century. NGOs now address a variety of issues and causes, ranging over scientific exchanges, religion, emergency aid, and humanitarian affairs.

In 1909 there were fewer than 200 registered international NGOs. By the mid-1990s, given the rapid development of global communications, there were well over 2,000 such organizations. NGOs benefit from being given an ever more formal role in multilateral bodies, such as the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the European Union. Article 71 of the UN Charter actually instructs the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) “to make suitable arrangements for consultation with [NGOs]”. NGOs make it possible for contacts and information exchanges to take place across borders without the involvement of governments. NGOs are an accepted part of international relations and, by influencing national and multilateral policy-making, are becoming increasingly instrumental. Many of them have been criticised for narrow agendas and lack of accountability.

Women's groups

Probably the best-known women's movement is that engaged in political efforts to change the role and status of women in society. Women's groups have also worked to help others, primarily through religious and charitable activities. Whether political, religious, or charitable, the women's movement has sought to achieve greater social, economic, and political involvement for women.

During the 1960s, women's groups revealed discrimination in the workplace, where women received less pay and fewer promotions than men did. They also uncovered barriers to women seeking political office and to female students striving for high academic achievement. Many countries that underwent Communist revolutions or take-overs granted women equal rights and benefits, often long before women in Western societies obtained such rights. In 1918, for example, the Soviet Union instituted maternity leave, government-funded child care, equal pay for equal work, equal education, and the right to hold any political office.

In developing countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, few organized women's movements have emerged. In addition, vast cultural differences make it difficult to determine the direction the women's movement may take in such countries. For instance, Muslim women in the Middle East and northern Africa come from a tradition where men's and women's activities have been strictly segregated and women have lived largely in seclusion. Women in eastern and western Africa, on the other hand, have a long history of social independence as

food producers and traders. Despite cultural differences, women in developing countries share some common concerns such as low pay, little job security, poor working conditions and heavy demands for high productivity and obedience.

The United Nations sponsored several conferences to examine women's living conditions around the world during its Decade for Women (1975-1985). It also sponsored the fourth UN women's conference, held in Beijing in September 1995. At those conferences, women from the developing world expressed concern about food shortages, the poverty of women and children, and other issues.

Contemporary women's movements have had an impact on several levels of society in industrial countries such as Canada, Sweden, and the United States. Women's groups have changed many people's views about male and female roles. These changes have affected the workplace, the family, and the way women live their lives. As a result of the vote, women's groups have influenced election results and government. They have also influenced legislation.

Certain broad cultural changes have taken place that reflect new attitudes toward the roles of men and women. They also point to a growing equality between the sexes. Several women have held the highest political office in their country, including Indira Gandhi of India, Golda Meir of Israel, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Corazon Aquino of the Philippines, and Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom.

 **2.4 Activity 9**

Discuss the significance of the trade unions and women's pressure groups in instigating social change.

Topic 9: International pressure groups

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is an independent, worldwide human-rights organization. It works to free people imprisoned "for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin, sex, religion, or language, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence." The organization also opposes torture and the death penalty. It received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977.

Amnesty International has members in about 110 countries and includes more than 2,000 adoption groups. Each of these groups adopts at least two prisoners in countries other than its own. It works for their release by pressuring government officials and arousing public opinion. The organization also sends observers to political trials, investigates prison conditions, and publishes reports of human-rights violations. The organization, founded in 1961, is based in London.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

WWF is an international voluntary organization devoted to the care and conservation of the natural living world. The WWF was founded in Zurich, Switzerland, in 1961, its aim being to reverse the degradation of the Earth's environment through sustainable development, the conservation of natural resources, and the maintenance of biological diversity. WWF's work helps to spotlight important environmental issues, such as global warming, sea pollution, road-building, toxic waste, housing development, the over-exploitation of natural resources, and the damage all these things can do to life on Earth. The organization places particular emphasis on its education work, aiming to ensure that both children and adults are well informed about the environment and to influence national and international policy decisions.

In 1997 the WWF had a worldwide network of 25 national organizations (being active in 96 countries) and had 4.7 million supporters around the world. The WWF works with other organizations that support its aims, and enlists help from governments, conservation groups, and cultural bodies.

Greenpeace

Greenpeace is an independent organization that campaigns to protect the environment. It has some 2.9 million members worldwide in more than 40 countries. Formed by a group of North American activists in 1971, it has since opened offices around the world. As well as its campaigning work, it also has a charitable trust in the United Kingdom which funds scientific research and undertakes educational work on environmental issues. Greenpeace campaigns against environmental abuse, through non-violent direct action. Activists draw public attention to such abuse by hazardous interventions, and have, in the past, entered nuclear test zones, blocked toxic effluent pipes, placed themselves between whale and harpoon, and steered inflatable dinghies under dangerous waste drums. Current issues on which the organization is campaigning include the atmosphere (global warming), the protection of the biodiversity of forests and oceans (saving the rainforests, protecting whales and dolphins), the ending of toxic pollution through effluents, and nuclear power.

Friends of the Earth

Friends of the Earth is also an organization that campaigns for the protection of the environment. It was founded in 1971 and total membership in 1994 numbered about 14 million across 50 countries. The declared aims of the organization are to protect the Earth against further deterioration, to repair damage caused by human activities, to safeguard natural resources, to promote sustainable development, and to preserve the Earth's ecological, cultural, and ethnic diversity. These aims are pursued through public education, political lobbying, leafleting, peaceful protest, and sometimes direct action. Campaigns include raising awareness of air and water pollution, damage to the ozone layer, climate change, nuclear risks, deforestation, and endangered marine life.

2.4 Activity 10

Identify international pressure groups operating in PNG and outline some of their work/achievements

Topic 10: Pressure groups in PNG

National Council of Women

The PNG National Council of Women is formally recognized as the voice for PNG women. It was established by an Act of Parliament in 1975, to assist with 'women's development'. The membership comprises of nation-wide affiliation of women's groups.

Nation must learn to address vital issues

The three deaths confirmed as a result of the student protest will remain a stark legacy of the chain of events that should never have occurred.

Susan Setae, the president of the National Council of Women, said yesterday that the nation should learn a lesson from these events, a lesson on how to address matters of national importance.

The statement is the most perceptive of the dozens that have been released in the past two days. It is time we, the people of PNG, took a long, hard look at ourselves, and vow never again to allow uninformed emotion, cynical manipulation and a skewed sense of nationalism to exact such a horrific price.

The National – Editorial, 28 June 2001

Women in Politics

Another women's group is 'Women in Politics'. This group was formed in 1986. It is an issue-oriented group consisting primarily of educated elite women. It consciously seeks to encourage and advocate for more women to participate in formal politics and decision-making at all levels of government.

Transparency International

TI says crooks should not be let off easily

People found to be involved in corrupt practices should not be let easily off the hook says Transparency International PNG. And TI is working on the possibility of private prosecution or of ensuring that the office of the Public Prosecutor and fraud squad have the resources to prosecute.

Post-Courier, 27 August 2001

TI backs proposal

Transparency International PNG has thrown its weight behind the recommendations of the Constitutional Development Commission for a life ban on MPs holding leadership positions if they are found guilty of criminal offences and of breaching provisions of the Leadership Code.

Post-Courier, 15 August 2001

2.4 Activity 11

Read the two newspaper extracts above and decide what Transparency International is all about. Which group of people in the community does TI (PNG) represent?

Listed below are a number of Papua New Guinean pressure groups. For each group in the list, identify whose interests they represent. Select two from the list and research their policies and activities.

- *PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum*
- *National Aids Council*
- *Media Council*
- *National heart Foundation*
- *Chamber of Commerce*
- *Catholic Bishops Conference*
- *Institute of National Affairs*

List as many other pressure groups as you can.

References

- Longman (1997). *The Longman Dictionary of Politics, Civics and Environment*, Longman, Melbourne
- McInnes, D. (1995). *Dellasta Encyclopedia Papua New Guinea*, Dellasta Pacific, Burwood
- Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* CD-ROM (2001). Microsoft Corporation.
- NDOE (1998). *National Government*
- NDOE (1999). *Government in Papua New Guinea*
- NDOE (1999). *Government and the People*
- Post-Courier* (PNG daily newspaper)
- Rannells, J. (1990). *A Fact Book on Modern PNG*, OUP
- Sepoe, O. (2000). *Changing Gender Relations in Papua New Guinea*, UBSPD, New Delhi
- The National* (PNG daily newspaper)
- The Weekend Australian*
- World Book Encyclopedia CD ROM (1999). IBM.

Glossary

Absentee vote	A vote cast on election day outside the voters own electorate.
Ballot	The process of voting at an election.
Ballot paper	The printed form on which electors cast their votes. The term “ballot papers” is applied to the blank (unused) forms and sometimes to those that have been used. Ballot papers are carefully counted and checked to avoid malpractice they are not numbered.
By-election	An election held between general elections, for a single parliamentary seat. A by-election is held to fill a vacancy resulting from the death or resignation of a Member of Parliament between general elections.
Candidate	A person who nominates for election, especially for a Seat in parliament. Most parliamentary candidates contest elections on behalf of a political party. The first step for a prospective candidate is to win selection by the political party and become its official candidate. Candidates who stand without party support are known as “Independents.
Chief Electoral Officer	The senior person in charge of parliamentary elections. The responsibilities of this officer are not confined to election day, but also include tasks such as the compilation of electoral rolls and keeping them up to date.
Coalition	A combination of political parties in parliament, although each party retains its separate party structure. Partners in a coalition must make compromises on policy and choice of Ministers or Shadow Ministers in order to reach agreement.
Compulsory voting	The legal requirement that people must vote if they are registered to do so. Many countries do not have compulsory voting, and its benefits and disadvantages are the subject of political debate. In Australia, compulsory voting applies to parliamentary elections and referendums.
Constituent	A resident within an electorate, especially in relation to the local Member of Parliament.
Election	Choosing one or more of a number of candidates by voting. Many different voting systems have been devised.
Election policy	Party policy prepared for a particular election. The party leader usually announces the election policy, at least in general terms, in a speech early in a campaign. The election policy will tend to focus on matters of topical interest and, perhaps, be modified according to what is perceived to be the mood of the electors.
Electoral office	The government premises where electoral staff compile electoral rolls and organise elections.
Electoral roll	An official list of people entitled to vote. These lists show the name and address of each elector. They are used at elections to check the claim of each person asking for a vote.
Electoral systems	Voting systems to choose political representatives or to fill positions in organizations such as clubs.
Electorate	A voting district usually, represented by one Member of Parliament. The boundaries of electorates can be altered from time to time, as a result of shifts in population or changes in electoral law.

Faction	An organised group within a larger organization, especially within a political party.
How-to-vote cards	Printed cards or leaflets that show how to fill in the ballot papers in accordance with the recommendations of a party or candidate.
Ideology	The ideas and attitudes on which political policy is based.
Informal vote	A ballot paper that has not been filled in correctly and is therefore a wasted vote. There are detailed rules that define the requirements of a formal (effective) vote and these rules vary slightly in different elections. The main principle is that the voter's intention must be clear.
Issue of writs	The formal action that begins the process for holding an election or a referendum.
Landslide	An election which results in a large majority for one party, usually associated with a substantial swing in voting.
Leader of the Opposition	The leader in parliament of the largest non-government party. The Opposition Leader is the opposition aspirant for the position of Prime Minister or Premier and is the chief debating opponent of the government leader. The position of Leader of the Opposition is officially recognised, and the holder of the position receives higher pay and better facilities than those received by a backbencher.
Lobby (to)	To attempt in a direct manner to influence attitudes or decisions of politicians, Ministers and governments.
Majority	More than half the total valid votes in an election, or more supporters than opponents. A majority in Parliament is more than half the Members eligible to vote.
Mandate	The right to govern, based on the approval of the electors.
Minister	A Member of Parliament appointed to the executive and usually responsible for administration of a Department
Ministerial (responsibility)	The convention that a Minister takes responsibility for the actions of his/her department.
Minority government	A government formed by a party lacking a majority. This type of government must rely on voting support in parliament of a sufficient number of independents or members of another party. The likelihood of a minority government is greater when the electoral system encourages the formation of a number of small parties.
Nepotism	The giving of favours or position to friends or relatives by powerful people. Nepotism can be practised by governments, private enterprise and various organizations.
Nomination for election	The official procedure by which an intending candidate applies to be listed as a candidate for election. To stand for a parliamentary election, the intending candidate must meet criteria similar to those that must be met by voters, although sometimes the criteria are stricter. The correctly completed nomination document, together with a deposit, must be lodged with the Returning Officer before the time officially set for the close of nominations.
Opposition	The Members of Parliament belonging to the major party, or coalition, opposed to the government. Opposition speakers criticise almost everything the government does or proposes, in keeping with the confrontationalist style of debate.
Optional	A variation of preferential voting in which it is not necessary to indicate

preferential voting	preferences for all candidates. The main advantage of this system is the reduction in accidental informal votes.
Party discipline	Efforts by political parties to persuade members, especially prominent ones, to support party decisions. It is not unusual for individual members or groups to disagree with various party decisions on policy and tactics.
Party system	The party system tends to result in stable and predictable government when there are a small number of parties represented in parliament.
Platform	The basic policies of a political party, sometimes written into a party's constitution. Platforms change over the years as a result of changing attitudes in the community.
Policy	The publicly stated aims and ideals of a political party. It represents the party's fundamental political philosophy and long-term aims. Policies are quite often presented in fine-sounding but very vague terms.
Policy formation	Most parties have meetings or conferences of a democratic nature that make or change policy, but real decision-making is often done behind the scenes.
Political party	An organization with particular political beliefs and policies and the aim of putting them into operation.
Poll	An election, also the organised procedure of voting
Polling place	An officially appointed venue for voting at an election. Public buildings such as schools or hall are most often used.
Postal vote	A vote made by an elector unable to attend a polling place and posted to the electoral authorities.
Preferential voting	A system in which voters can indicate the order in which they prefer the various candidates. The allocation of preferences can decisively affect the outcome. If no candidate receives more than half the votes, the one with the fewest votes is eliminated from the contest and the votes for that candidate are allocated to one or other of the remaining candidates according to the second preference. The process of elimination and distribution continues until one candidate receives more than half the vote.
Pre-selection	The process of choosing a political parties candidate to stand for election to parliament. Informal groups or well-organised factions often play a major part in selecting candidates.
Pressure group	An organised group trying to influence political decisions. These can include policy decisions by parties or decisions by individual candidates. Pressure groups tend to concentrate on particular issues with great intensity.
Public opinion polls	Assessment of public opinion, including voting intentions, from questioning small numbers of people. Results can be reasonably representative if a fair cross-section of the community is involved.
Rank and file	Political party members who are neither officers of the party or members of parliament.
Redistribution	Revision of the boundaries of electorates. The size and shape of electorates need to be changed form time to time due to changes in population distribution.
Referendum	A vote of the people to indicate their opinion on a particular matter.

Representative democracy	Government by elected representatives of the people.
Right to vote	The legal right to participate in an election.
Scrutineers	People officially entitled to watch the election process to guard against improper practices and mistakes.
Secret ballot	An election in which the procedure enables each voter's choice to be kept secret. This feature aims at reducing the possibility of unfair pressure being exerted on voters.
Silent majority	A term used to imply that most people silently disagree with changes promoted by public argument and demonstrations.
Suffrage	The legal right to vote. The word is generally regarded as equivalent to franchise.
Swing	A change in the percentage of votes received by the political parties.
Swinging voter	A voter without a continuing party allegiance, whose vote might change at any election. Some are well informed about politics and vote carefully, others might be influenced by superficial factors or have little regard for serious issues.
Writs	Written official commands, documents that formally require elections to be held. Important requirements and information given in the writs include the date by which nominations of candidates must be made and the date on which the election is to be held.