

# 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 BRC 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.*

*The BRC is not subject to the direction of either governments and does not promote any particular outcome to the Referendum.*

**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 BRC 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 BRC, and decisions are made collectively at BRC meetings.

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

### BRC's Guiding Principles:

Neutrality

Impartiality

Transparency

Professionalism

Inclusivity

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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 only once.

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 once the results of the Referendum are determined, the governments of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville will consult on these results before any final decision is made.



THIS FACTSHEET IS AUTHORISED BY THE CHIEF REFERENDUM OFFICER

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For more information click on [bougainville-referendum.org](http://bougainville-referendum.org) or write to [info@bougainville-referendum.org](mailto:info@bougainville-referendum.org)