Foreword and Acknowledgements

Every general election in Papua New Guinea, since 1964, has been the subject of a comprehensive collaborative study by Papua New Guinean and foreign scholars. And every study (with the exception, to date, of 2002) has been published. This volume continues a longstanding tradition.

The election of 2007, however, generated particular interest: not only did it follow what has been described as Papua New Guinea’s worst election ever, in 2002 (in which elections in six of the country’s 109 electorates were declared to be ‘failed elections’), it was the first general election to be held under a new limited preferential voting (LPV) system; it also followed the first full parliamentary term under the *Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates*, which had been introduced in 2001 in an attempt to strengthen political parties and create a greater degree of stability in the National Parliament, and was the first to embrace a ‘whole-of-government’ approach to electoral administration, through the Inter-departmental Election Committee.

Moves to set up a coordinated study of the 2007 election were initiated within the National Research Institute in 2005. Subsequently, the Registrar of Political Parties requested a Domestic Observation of the election by Papua New Guinean scholars and civil society organizations, and the Australian Agency for International Development-funded Electoral Support Program (ESP) also commissioned a monitoring of the election. These three initiatives converged. An ESP-funded Domestic Observation was organized through the National Research Institute, under the joint leadership of Dr Ray Anere of the National Research Institute and Dr Nicole Haley of the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program of The Australian National University, focusing on the administration and outcome of the election. The report of the Domestic Observation was submitted to the Inter-departmental Election Committee, and to the ESP in 2008 and was published by the National Research Institute in 2009. This volume draws heavily from the Domestic Observation (a number of whose team leaders have contributed chapters to this volume), but attempts, like the studies of earlier Papua New Guinea elections, to look at broader issue of electoral politics at both the national level and within selected electorates.

As always, the tasks of pulling together a number of contributors and obtaining accurate electoral data have not been easy (as at May 2011 results were still not available for all electorates and the Electoral Commissioner’s report had not been tabled in parliament). This is reflected in the time it has taken to achieve publication.
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