



Falkland Islands Government

News Release

Record Turnout in First Falklands Election Held Under New Constitution

6 November 2009

Voters in the Falkland Islands yesterday (5 November) exercised their right to democracy by casting their votes in the first election to be held since the new Constitution was adopted on 1 January 2009. The Constitution enhances local democracy and reinforces self-determination, which led to a record turnout of 1,232 (77.7 per cent of the electorate) going to the polls.

Eight new Members were elected to the Falkland Islands Legislative Assembly, which is empowered to pass legislation for the peace, order and good government of the Falkland Islands. The number of candidates standing for election has increased since the 2005 General Election, with 18 candidates standing for eight seats.

Mobile polling stations travelled around the Falkland Islands by land and air to register the votes of the Islands' rural electorate living in Camp, the local term for the countryside outside the capital Stanley. The turnout in Camp was even higher than the total turnout at 89.3 per cent.

The Returning Officer, Dr Tim Thorogood, Chief Executive of the Falkland Islands Government, commented: "The new Constitution reinforces the Islanders' right to determine their own future, as self-determination is now embedded in the main body of the Constitution. It also enhances local democracy and this is very important to Islanders, encouraging them to make the sometimes long journey to the polling station."

- Ends -

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Notes to Editors:

1. The Falkland Islands is one of the UK's most dynamic Overseas Territories. Under its constitution, eight Assembly Members are elected every four years to represent two constituencies. The capital, Stanley, is represented by five Members, while three Members represent the constituency known as Camp, the local term for the countryside.
2. The Falkland Islands are located in the South Atlantic, about 300 miles from the nearest point on the South American mainland. The Islands are made up of two large islands (East and West Falkland) and some 778 smaller islands, covering an area over half the size of Wales. The capital, Stanley, is on East Falkland.
3. Falkland Islands information is available at www.falklands.gov.fk.