RINGA HORA
Services
Workforce Development Council

KELE'A

ELEVATING PACIFIC FUTURES IN THE SERVICE SECTOR 2025

Introduction

The Kele'a (conch shell) is the pride of the ocean bed and beachfront of Pacific islands. Each piece is unique and beautifully etched with a gamut of patterns running across and all over it. In ancient times, the Kele'a was used amongst Tongan tribes to signal unknown ships spotted over the horizon. It was also used to summon the community to important events and gatherings, and is most commonly used as a musical instrument.[1]

This resource celebrates and acknowledges the valuable contribution of Pacific peoples to the Service sector in Aotearoa.

It also serves as a call to action for service industry stakeholders, training providers, learners, and Pacific communities to explore ways to further amplify and build on these contributions.

1. Burley, David V. The Birth of Polynesia: An Archaeological Journey Through the Kingdom of Tonga. Archaeology Press, Simon Fraser University, 2023.

Pacific cultural values

Fakateagaaga
Spirituality

– >< >< –

Aro'a
Love

– >< >< –

Faka'apa'apa
Respect

– >< >< –

Vuvale
Family

— >< >< –

Ola Fetufaaki
Reciprocity

– >< >< –

Soalaupule
Consensus and collectivism

AMPLIFYING PACIFIC VOICES

Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework

Ringa Hora Workforce Development Council acknowledges the value of the Pacific workforce. This resource integrates well-known uses and meanings of the Kele'a across the Pacific, connecting them to key cultural values that underpin the Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework which was created collectively by Ohu Ahumahi, the six Workforce Development Councils. These values include: Fakateagaaga (Spirituality), Aro'a (Love), Faka'apa'apa (Respect), Vuvale (Family), Ola Fetufaaki (Reciprocity), and Soalaupule (Consensus and Collectivism).

The Ohu Ahumahi Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework vision is to amplify Pacific voices and unite industry leadership with workforce development, forging a future anchored by equity, innovation and transformation. To achieve this there is a need to provide Pacific-focused skills leadership, qualifications and quality assurance.

The framework can be used for the Service sector to draw inspiration from and adapt to their organisation.

By Pacific for Industry

Kele'a is informed by what the workforce (Pacific and non-Pacific) have told us about the Pacific workforce, learners and their contributions.

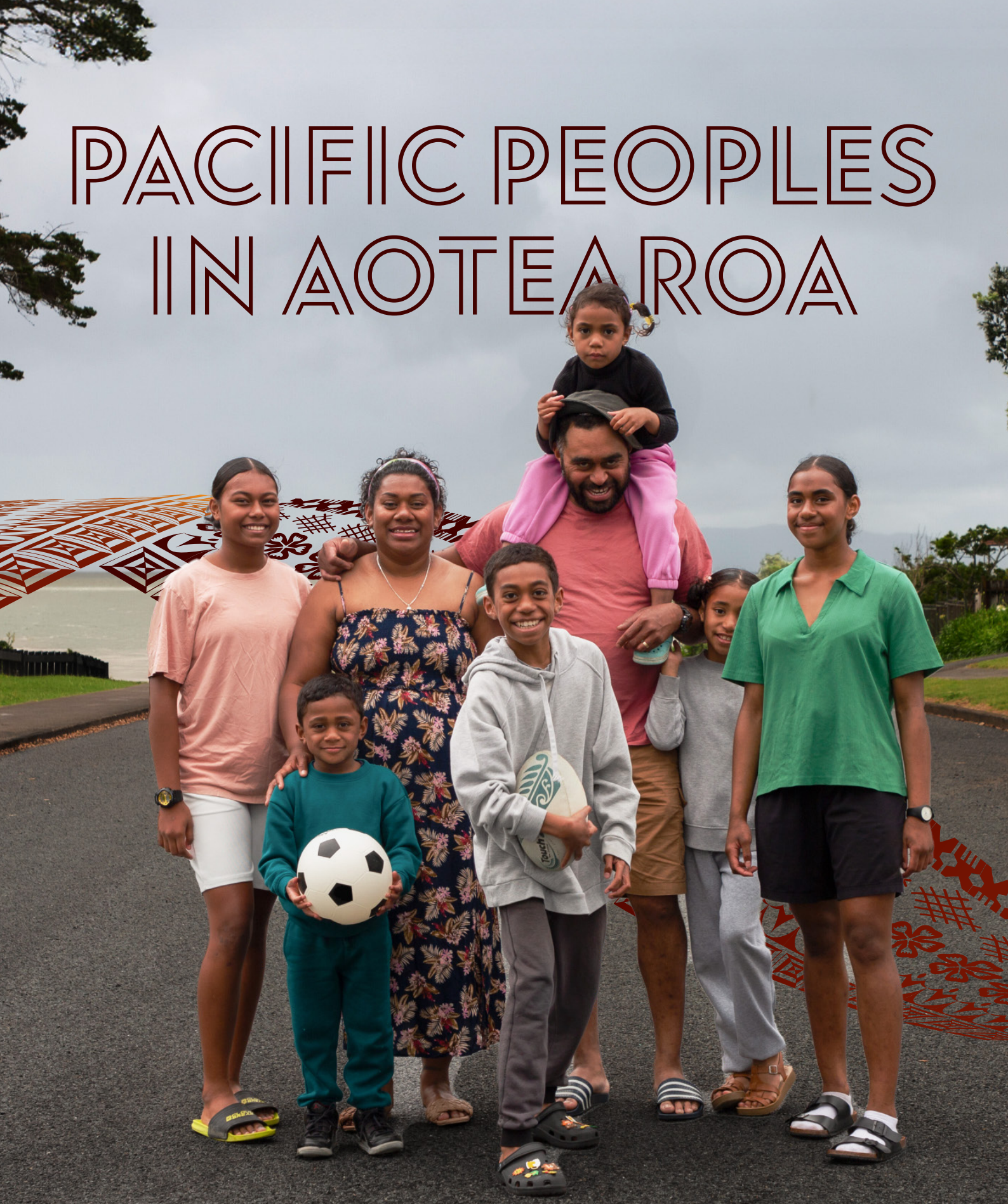
Ringa Hora's intention is to recognise, empower, and amplify the contributions of Pacific peoples to the Service sector in New Zealand.

Purpose:

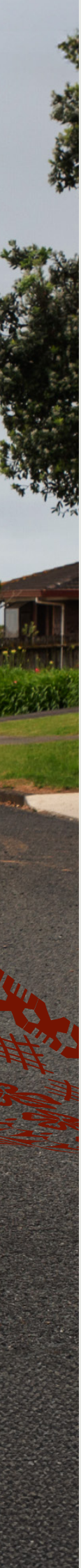
- Demonstrate the value of the Pacific workforce, Pacific learners and Pacific businesses to the Service sector.
- Showcase real-world industry profiles of pathways to employment and career advancement.
- Support industry with tools and resources for a thriving Pacific workforce in the Service sector.

Kele'a's intention is to provide a current state of play for Pacific peoples in the Service sector. It will provide information, insights, case studies and Pacific workforce stories for users to benefit from.

PACIFIC PEOPLES IN AOTEAROA



New Zealand's cultural landscape has been significantly shaped by its Pacific diaspora. These communities are deeply rooted in traditional values, despite living away from their homelands.



Migration, cultural adaptation, and resilience have defined their experience in New Zealand. Over time, the Pacific diaspora has played a crucial role in enriching New Zealand society through their cultural, social, and economic contributions.

Historical background of the Pacific diaspora in New Zealand

The mass migration of Pacific peoples to New Zealand began after World War II. It was driven by economic factors and the need for labour in industries such as manufacturing and agriculture. Formal government programmes and informal networks facilitated this migration, with Pacific peoples drawn by the promise of better wages and educational opportunities. Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Niue, Tokelau, and the Cook Islands saw substantial numbers of their populations migrate during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

By the 1970s, Pacific peoples had become a significant part of New Zealand's population. However, the economic downturn of the late 1970s brought challenges, particularly what is now commonly known as the dawn raids, where Pacific peoples were disproportionately targeted as overstayers. Despite these setbacks, Pacific communities in New Zealand continued to grow and diversify, cementing their place within the country's social and cultural fabric.

Demographics and population growth

According to the 2023 Census, there were approximately 442,632 Pacific peoples living in New Zealand, accounting for 9% of the population. This is a significant increase from previous decades, as Pacific peoples have one of the highest population growth rates in New Zealand. The Pacific population is youthful, with a median age of 24.9 years compared to 38.1 years for the general population.[2]

The majority of Pacific peoples in New Zealand are of Samoan descent, followed by Tongan, Cook Islands Māori, and Niueans. Furthermore, two-thirds of Pacific peoples in New Zealand were born in the country, and two out of five identify with multiple ethnicities.

Social and economic challenges faced by the Pacific diaspora

Despite their cultural vibrancy, Pacific communities in New Zealand face several social and economic challenges. Pacific peoples are overrepresented in low-income jobs and have higher unemployment rates than the general population.[3 4 5] Many Pacific families live in overcrowded housing, which contributes to poor health outcomes and lower educational attainment.[6]

Health disparities are particularly concerning, with Pacific peoples experiencing higher rates of chronic diseases like diabetes and heart disease. Access to healthcare remains a challenge, and many Pacific peoples struggle to find culturally appropriate service.[7]

In education, Pacific students have lower rates of achievement compared to other ethnic groups. Socioeconomic factors, language barriers, and the lack of representation in the curriculum contribute to these disparities. While improvements have been made, Pacific youth continue to face obstacles to success in secondary and tertiary education.[8]

2. Stats NZ. "Pacific peoples Ethnic Group Summaries." Stats NZ, 2023.
3. Ministry for Pacific peoples. "Pacific peoples in Aotearoa Report." Ministry for Pacific peoples, 2023.
4. Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. "Pacific peoples Labour Market Statistics Snapshot – June 2024." MBIE, 2024.
5. Figure NZ. "Unemployment rate in New Zealand." Figure.NZ, 2024.
6. Stats NZ. "Living in a crowded house: Exploring the ethnicity and well-being of people in crowded households." Stats NZ, 2023.
7. Pacific Perspectives Limited. "Pacific Perspectives Health System Review." Ministry of Health NZ, 2019.
8. Humanium. "Educational inequities for marginalized students in New Zealand." Humanium, 2025.

OUR PACIFIC WORKFORCE

Pacific peoples make substantial contributions to New Zealand's economy, particularly in sectors like manufacturing, public sector and health.

However, they are often concentrated in low wage jobs, which exacerbates economic inequality within the diaspora.[9] In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on entrepreneurship within Pacific communities, with many aspiring Pacific business owners receiving support from organisations such as the Pacific Business Trust[10] and others. Pacific owned businesses in construction, professional, scientific and technical services, and transport, postal and warehousing industries make up more than 50% of the total number of Pacific businesses.[11]

The Pacific workforce is particularly valuable in the Service sector, where cultural competence and community-centred approaches are critical. Pacific workers bring a deep understanding of cultural values and traditions that help bridge gaps between mainstream services and marginalised communities. Their contributions strengthen the fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand society and enhances the delivery of services to Pacific peoples and diverse populations.[12]

The future of our Pacific diaspora

Looking to the future, the Pacific diaspora faces both opportunities and challenges. With a young and increasingly educated population, Pacific communities are well-positioned to make an even greater impact. As more Pacific peoples enter the workforce and move into leadership roles, they create more opportunities to help shape the future of New Zealand.

However, persistent disparities in health, education, and economic outcomes need to be addressed. As younger generations navigate the complexities of maintaining their cultural heritage in an increasingly globalised world, the question of identity will continue to remain crucial. Economic inequality further limits their educational and career opportunities. A lack of Pacific representation in leadership and media affects aspirations, and for those belonging to multiple marginalised groups, such as LGBTQ+ Pacific youth, these challenges are compounded, leading to even greater inequities and mental health concerns. [13] [14]

The Pacific diaspora in New Zealand is a dynamic and essential part of the country's social fabric. While they face significant challenges, Pacific communities have made substantial contributions to New Zealand's culture, economy, and social landscape. Looking forward, their continued engagement and resilience ensure that the Pacific diaspora will remain a vital and influential force in New Zealand's future.

9. The Treasury New Zealand. "The New Zealand Pacific Economy." The Treasury New Zealand, 2018.
10. Pacific Business Trust. "Pacific Business Trust." Pacific Business Trust, 2025.
11. Pacific Business Trust. "PBT One Pager – BIM-combined.pdf." Pacific Business Trust, 2025.
12. Ringa Hora. "Pacific in the Service sector." Ringa Hora WDC, 2023.
13. Ministry of Youth Development. "Youth19 Brief: Pacific Rainbow Young People." Ministry of Youth Development, 2023.
14. Roy, Rituparna, et al. "Mental Health and Wellbeing for Young People from Intersectional Identity Groups: Inequity for Māori, Pacific, Rainbow Young People, and those with a Disabling Condition." University of Waikato, 2023.

PACIFIC PEOPLES IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

Pacific workers increasing

2017
81,700

2022
103,600

27%↑
Increase over 5 years

Proportion of Pacific peoples

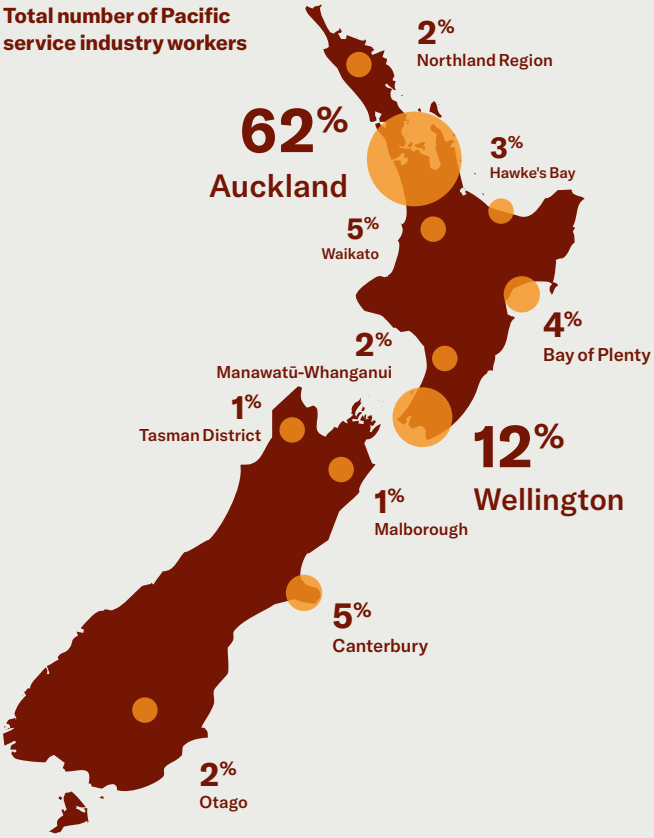
2015 → 2022
7% → 9%

Gender representation

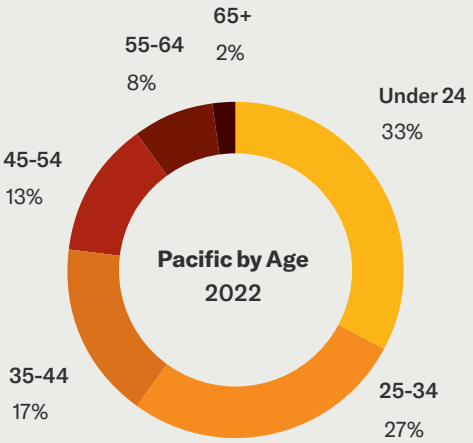
Men | Women
46% | 54%

Employment by Region
2022

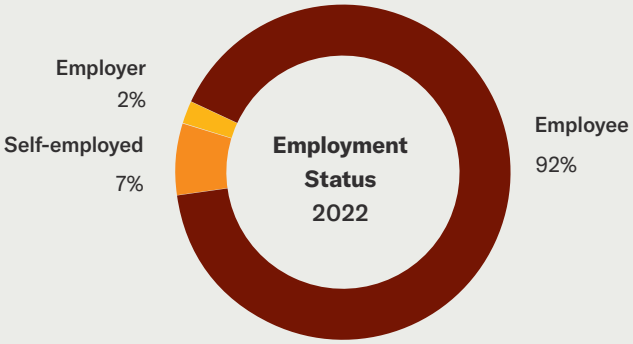
103,600
Total number of Pacific service industry workers



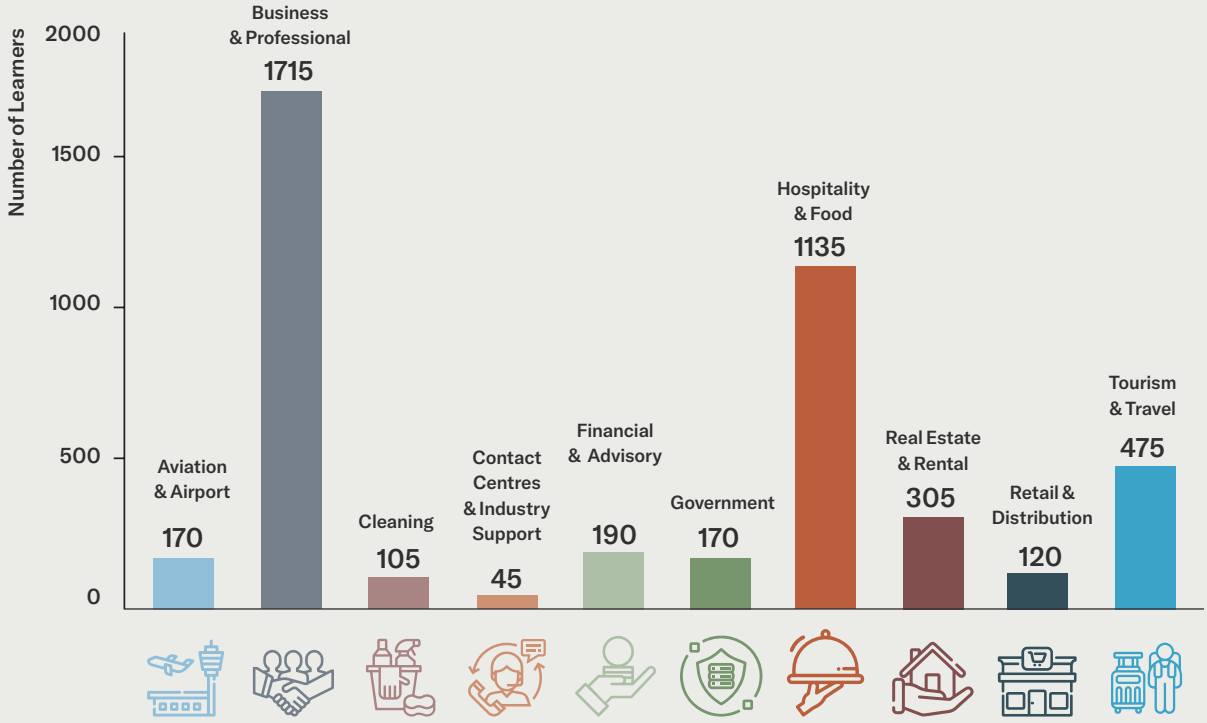
Pacific by Age



Employment Status



Pacific learner enrolment data (total of 4430 learners)
2023



Pacific learner enrolment data (total of 4430 learners)
2023

Level	Programme	Qualification	Total
2	30	105	135
3	1230	975	2205
4	305	1035	1340
5	60	655	715
6	5	30	35
7 (non degree)	0	0	0
Total	1630	2800	4430

PACIFIC PEOPLES IN THE SERVICE SECTOR

Pacific peoples make up a vital part of the workforce in Aotearoa, contributing significantly to the service sector through their skills, cultural values, and economic participation. However, they also face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to fully realise their potential.

This section explores the current state of Pacific learners and workers in the Service sector, and the unique obstacles they encounter.

Between 2013 and 2023 the Pacific population grew at almost three times the rate of the national rate.[15] The demographic landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand is shifting significantly, with profound implications for the nation's workforce. By 2038, over half of the workforce is projected to consist of Māori, Pacific, or Asian individuals, with considerable regional variations. For example, Auckland and the upper North Island already have higher concentrations of these groups. This shift will inevitably influence the Service sector, which encompasses industries such as aviation, cleaning, hospitality, business and professional, financial advisors, real estate, tourism, security, local government and contact centres.[16]

Pacific workforce

Pacific peoples make up 9% of the overall Service sector workforce. This demographic is characterised by a notably young population, with a median age of 24.9 years, compared to 38.1 years for European New Zealanders (2023).[17]

This young population although dynamic, also faces unique challenges. Many young Pacific peoples leave school early to support their families financially, often taking up low-wage jobs that limit their long-term career and educational prospects further entrenching socioeconomic disparities.[18]

The Pacific workforce experienced significant growth, increasing from 72,300 in 2015 to 103,600 in 2022. Until 2019, this expansion was steady, with an average annual increase of 4,000 to 5,000 workers. However, in 2020, workforce numbers declined, likely due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite this setback, a strong recovery followed in 2021 and 2022, demonstrating economic resilience. The most rapid growth occurred between 2021 and 2022, with the workforce expanding by over 10,000 new workers in that period alone.

A high proportion of Pacific workers lack formal qualifications. Approximately 14% of Pacific employees in the Service sector have no qualifications, the highest among the different ethnic groups. In cleaning services alone, 33% of Pacific workers have no qualifications, which could also reflect systemic barriers to education and skill development.

The Pacific workforce in Aotearoa reflects diversity, spanning cultural identities, skillsets, and aspirations. Pacific peoples are not a homogenous group but represent a tapestry of ethnicities, including Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Niuean, Cook Islands Māori, Tokelauan, and others. This diversity enriches workplaces, bringing distinct strengths and perspectives to various industries. For example, Samoans form the largest Pacific workforce group in the Service sector (51%), followed by Tongans (18%) and Cook Islands Māori (16%).

While Pacific representation is notable in industries like security services (22%), contact centres (19%), cleaning (15%), and aviation (11%), their presence in fields such as real estate (4%), business and professional (5%) and financial services (6%) remain low. This is often due to systemic barriers, including a lack of mentorship, professional networks, and financial resources to pursue advanced qualifications.

This disparity highlights the concentration of Pacific workers in lower-wage, labour-intensive roles, underscoring the need for strategic workforce planning to expand their opportunities. For instance, industries like security, aviation and contact centres—where Pacific representation is strong—offer significant potential for skill development and career advancement through targeted interventions.

15. The Salvation Army. "State of Pacific peoples 2024." The Salvation Army, 2024.
16. Ringa Hora. "Pacific in the Service sector." Ringa Hora WDC, 2023.
17. Stats NZ. "Pacific peoples Ethnic Group Summaries." Stats NZ, 2023.
18. Sumeo, Saunoamaali'i Karanina. "Closing the Ethnic Pay Gap." E-Tangata, 2022.

Several issues affect Pacific workers disproportionately in the Service sector. One of the most pressing concerns is the high proportion of Pacific employees lacking formal qualifications. In 2022, 14% of Pacific workers in the sector had no qualifications, with the highest rates observed in the cleaning services sector (33%). Additionally, there is a significant digital divide impacting the Pacific community, which exacerbates educational and employment disparities.[19] Many young Pacific workers also experience a lack of culturally responsive support within their workplaces, which affects their ability to progress and succeed in their careers.[20]

These challenges are compounded by a declining number of Pacific learners with Service sector qualifications. Between 2019 and 2022, the number of Pacific learners decreased by 22%, with the most significant drop seen in provider-based learning environments. Post-COVID numbers have not yet reached or surpassed pre-COVID levels. In contrast, the number of workplace learners remained steady over the same period, suggesting a need for more accessible and flexible education pathways for Pacific peoples.

Economic contributions and industry representation

Pacific workers play a crucial role in several Service sector industries, contributing significantly to the sector's GDP. Despite representing only 6.5%[21] of the national workforce and 9% of the service sector, their economic impact is substantial, particularly in specific industries. This highlights their efficiency and dedication relative to their workforce size.

- **Cleaning Services:** Pacific workers contribute 14.5% of this sector's GDP, aligning with their proportional workforce representation. This reflects the heavy reliance on Pacific labour in roles that require physical resilience and reliability.
- **Contact Centres**: Generating 13.8% of the GDP in this sector, Pacific workers' strong communication skills and adaptability make them indispensable.
- **Security Services:** Pacific workers contribute 18.5% of the GDP in security services, the highest among all service sector industries. This reflects their dominant presence in roles requiring vigilance and responsibility.

Pacific workers are strongly represented in the Cleaning, Security, and Contact Centre industries, making significant contributions relative to their overall population.

19. Digital Council for Aotearoa New Zealand. "Addressing the Digital Divide: The Economic Case for Increasing Digital Inclusion." Digital.govt.nz, 2023.
20. EQ Consultants. "Pasifika in the Workplace: How to Support Pacific peoples." EQ Consultants, 2024.
21. Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment (MBIE). "Pacific peoples Labour Market Statistics Snapshot." MBIE, 2024.

For Pacific businesses to flourish, consideration should focus on the continuous need for guidance and mentoring at all business stages, with access to the right skills, capabilities, and resources, particularly funding, being both an enabler and a barrier.

- In addition to these specific industries, Pacific workers make notable contributions in sectors such as hospitality (6% of GDP) and retail (8.1% of GDP). These industries offer entry-level opportunities that attract a young workforce but often lack clear pathways for progression into higher-skilled and better-compensated roles.
- Pacific workers are strongly represented in the Cleaning, Security, and Contact Centre industries, making significant contributions relative to their overall population.

Entrepreneurship and economic growth

The rise of Pacific-owned small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) demonstrates the entrepreneurial potential within Pacific communities. Concentrated primarily in Auckland, these businesses span industries like retail, food services, and creative sectors.

A strong, connected, and collaborative business ecosystem with good infrastructure is desired. Building key personal qualities like resilience is crucial for business success. Additionally, the value of fanau/kainga/aiga (family), culture, and impact serves many communities, not just Pacific communities.[22 23 24]

Long-term economic impact

As the Pacific population continues to grow, their economic contributions are projected to expand across all service sectors. To ensure alignment of workforce representation and economic contribution to the sector, proactive investment in skills development, leadership training, and inclusive workplace practices are imperative to ensure Pacific workers can transition from lower-wage roles to positions of greater influence and responsibility.

Despite their positive contributions, Pacific workers remain underrepresented in leadership and governance roles, limiting their influence and ability to drive systemic change. Addressing this gap requires a concerted effort to build leadership capacity and create pathways for career progression.

22. Marshall, Roschelle. "Pasifika Pathways: Poster Table of Contents." Research Paper, 2023.
23. Ringa Hora. "Pacific in the Service Sector - Workforce Development Plan 2023" Ringa Hora WDC, 2023.
24. Pacific Business Trust. "PBT One Pager – BIM-combined.pdf." Pacific Business Trust, 2025.

PACIFIC LEARNERS

Pacific learners account for 12% of all learners in Service sector qualifications. However, their numbers have declined significantly, dropping by 22% between 2019 and 2022.

The decline is particularly evident in provider-based learning, which saw the sharpest reduction, while workplace-based learning has remained relatively steady over the years. **Despite these challenges, some key trends and insights have emerged:**

Enrolment by age groups

Under 25-year-olds make up a substantial portion of hospitality and tourism enrolments, reflecting the appeal of these industries for entry-level opportunities. For example, in 2023, 995 out of 1,135 Pacific hospitality learners were under 25.

Learners aged 25 and above dominate enrolments in business and professional services, and real estate training, suggesting that these areas attract career changers and those seeking advanced skills later in their careers.

Provider types and participation

Pacific learners are enrolled across a mix of training providers, including private training establishments (PTEs), industry training organisations (ITOs), and institutes of technology (ITPs) or polytechnics (Te Pūkenga). [Note: ITOs are now a work-based business division within the Te Pūkenga umbrella]. PTEs cater heavily to specific industries like aviation and tourism, offering niche qualifications tailored to workforce needs. A significant proportion of PTEs deliver foundation and/or vocational programmes, with only a very few delivering degree level programmes.

Wānanga and community education providers remain underutilised, due largely to their lack of service sector type qualifications on offer. However, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA) is widely recognised for its strong emphasis on cultural competency, particularly in the context of Māori and Pacific cultural values.

Most Pacific learners pursue Level 3 and Level 4 qualifications, with limited representation in advanced qualifications such as Level 6 and Level 7.

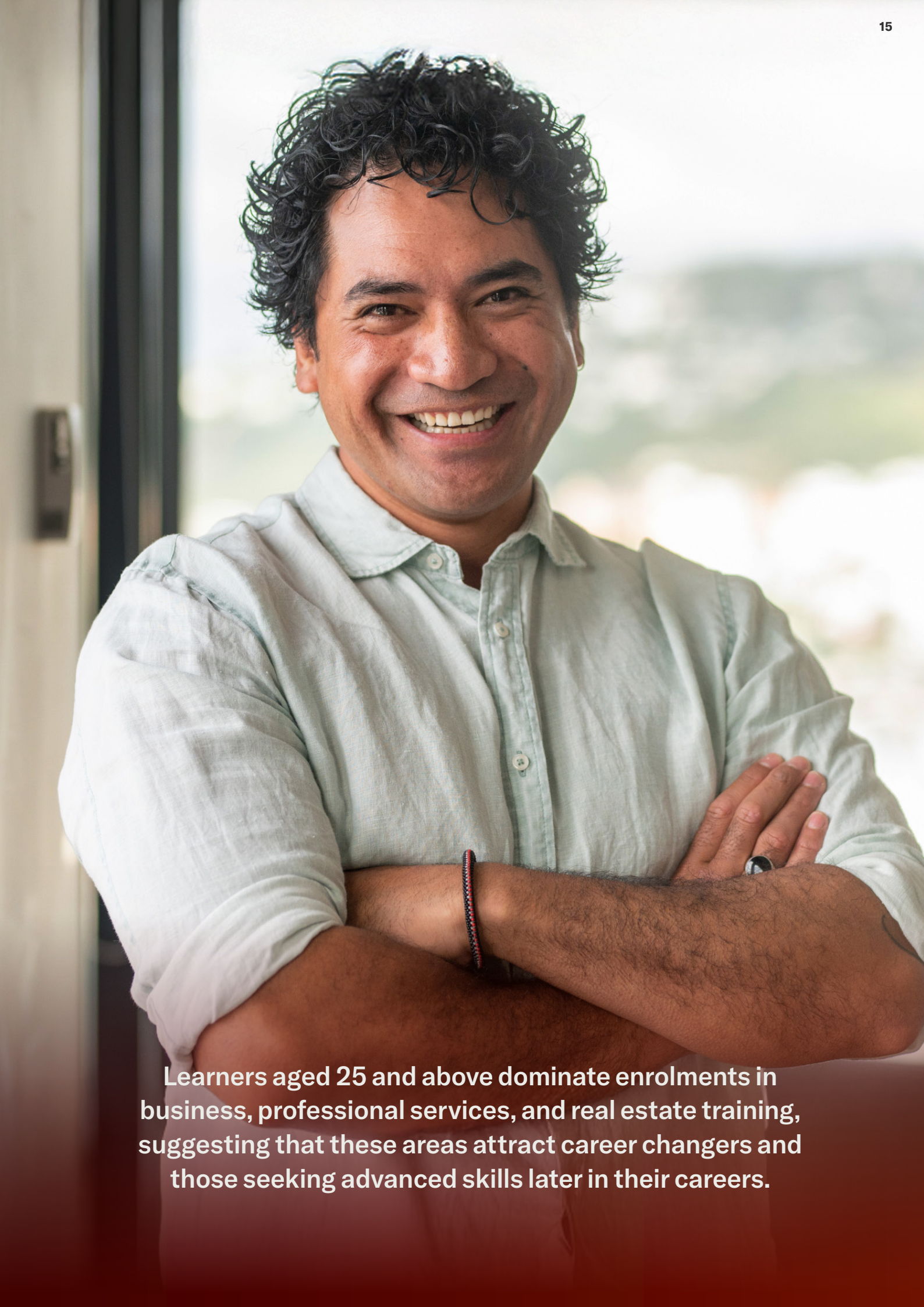
Decline in specific industries

Industries such as tourism and government services experienced significant drops in enrolment between 2019 and 2022, reflecting the broader impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these industries. However, these industries are slowly making a recovery with numbers now starting to increase.

Retention and qualification completion rates

Completion rates among Pacific learners vary significantly across sectors. Flexible programmes and pastoral care practices, as legislated in the tertiary and international code of practice – to support the wellbeing and safety of learners in Aotearoa[25], are essential to improving retention and completion, especially for learners juggling multiple responsibilities.

25. NZQA. "The Tertiary and International Learners Code of Practice." NZQA, 2025.



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This section explores the Pacific workforce themes in the Service sector, focusing on the current state of Pacific peoples in the service sector, their challenges, and actionable strategies for improvement, through the lens of the Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework.

Pictured Teru Time, Time Insurance

KEY INSIGHTS

Eight key themes were identified reflecting the experiences, challenges, and aspirations of Pacific peoples in the Service sector

Value of the Pacific workforce

Skills & mindset

Family influence & culture

Career pathways & education

Capability building

Career aspirations

Cost & access

Industry role & influence

The Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework emphasises principles such as Fakateagaaga (Spirituality), Aro'a (Love), Faka'apa'apa (Respect), Vuvale (Family), Ola Fetufaaki (Reciprocity), and Soalaupule (Consensus and Collectivism). These foundational values underlie Pacific contributions to the workforce, guiding interpersonal relationships, decision-making, and collective well-being.

Recognising and integrating these values into workplace cultures cultivates inclusion and collaboration. For instance, Havaiki Kai Pacific Catering, which incorporates family and cultural traditions into its operations, exemplifies the value of spirituality and respect in building meaningful connections and enhancing business success. This catering business draws on familial bonds, training family members to maintain high service standards while respecting the diverse cultural nuances of its clients.

Similarly, LM4 Group, a family-operated business – the parent company of three distinct businesses delivering reliable people focused solutions to entities across New Zealand. LM4 embodies the Mana Moana values by fostering reciprocity and collectivism in its operational model. By aligning business goals with family values, LM4 has created a unique approach that balances professionalism with cultural authenticity.

From a strengths-based perspective the *Kele'a – Pacific in the Service Sector Report* serves to amplify the amazing initiatives and programmes Service sector organisations have in place that supports workforce development for both career pathways and career advancement. Kele'a features a selection of real-life case studies and successful Pacific role models that industry organisations can draw inspiration from to continue supporting and strengthening this important work.

Value of the Pacific workforce

The Pacific workforce plays a vital role in enriching Aotearoa New Zealand's Service sector, contributing unique skills and cultural strengths that enhance organisational performance. Pacific peoples bring valuable attributes such as teamwork, effective communication, creativity, and strategic thinking—skills often developed through their strong family and community engagements. These transferable qualities foster positive team dynamics, improve productivity, and promote an inclusive workplace culture.

Faleomavaega Helen Karati (Government)

Helen's story is deeply grounded in her Samoan heritage, faith, and Pacific values. Her upbringing in a hardworking family instilled values of service (tautua), respect (fa'aaloalo), and love (alofa). Encourages people to "Know your why" and stay true to their values.

Recognising and leveraging the strengths of the Pacific workforce is crucial for organisational success. By embracing Pacific cultural values such as humour, storytelling, and collectivism, businesses can create supportive environments that build confidence and encourage professional growth. Providing ongoing training and development opportunities demonstrates an organisation's commitment to its workforce, ensuring employees feel valued and empowered to excel.

Pat Lapalapa (Real Estate)

Pat is dedicated to creating pathways for Pacific individuals in the industry, advocating for financial literacy and ethical practices. As he continues to grow in his career, Pat remains grounded in his values, believing that treating others with respect and integrity will lead to lasting opportunities.

Success is seen as a result of hard work, faith, and determination. Collaboration across industries is also key to maximising the potential of the Pacific workforce. By pooling resources and adopting a collective approach, businesses can drive innovation, boost productivity, and achieve greater efficiency. This strategy not only benefits employees but also strengthens the overall service sector, ensuring it remains dynamic and thriving.

It is essential to acknowledge the multifaceted roles Pacific peoples hold, balancing commitments to family, culture, church, and community. This includes recognising the contributions of Pacific peoples in unpaid volunteer roles, which also reflects their dedication and service ethos. Additionally, the Pacific Rainbow Community deserves recognition for its contributions, adding further diversity and richness to the Pacific workforce.

Temehari Laumemea Tauga

Hospitality

Temehari is one of the hardest working people you will ever meet. Alongside her 9-5 role, she co-directs Havaiki Kai, a family-run Island catering company specialising in seafood.

Temehari's story is one of perseverance, cultural pride, and community service. Her journey is a powerful reminder that with faith, resilience, and a strong support system, one can overcome any challenge and achieve greatness.

Naibuka Sivo

Aviation & Airport Services

His career in aviation demonstrates a commitment to lifelong learning and skills development. Starting as a loader at Auckland Airport, he worked his way up to an airfield safety compliance investigator.

His pursuit of a Master's degree in Aviation reflects his strong belief in continuous learning and professional growth.

Skills & mindset

Transferable skills

Pacific peoples consider their inherent abilities and attributes to be valuable organisational assets. Emphasis on the ability to translate Pacific attributes like humor, teamwork, creativity, strategic thinking, communication, storytelling and collectivism is key to the future of the workforce flourishing.

Recognising transferable skills is essential as they play a significant role in various aspects of life, including career journeys, often rooted in church and family values. In the church setting, leadership skills are imparted, but in Pacific cultures, these are not typically seen as 'skills building' but rather a natural way of interacting within the extended family unit. The church is a cornerstone of Pacific culture, and through Sunday services, roles are assigned to ensure smooth operations, along with leadership skills, cultural competencies, resilience and teamwork are developed. Following the church service, connection and engagement in Talanoa (conversation) will continue through to'ona'i (lunch) or in the kava/yaqona circle. The practice of talanoa nurtures active listening skills, communication skills and knowing one's place in the cultural ecosystem – all essential elements to building relationships.

Collectivism, a shared Pacific value encourages working as one. For instance, church leadership provides mentorship & guidance. Organising church events, fundraisers or sports tournaments bring family and community together for a common goal or outcome.

Collectivism in the workplace is paramount. Encouraging colleagues to work together towards achieving the company's objectives and goals, effectively and efficiently. Drawing inspiration from Pacific cultures and values around family and church. It is important team members are valued for their lived experience and what they bring to an organisation.

Sefa Faletanoa'i
(Business and Professional)

Throughout his career, Sefa has faced challenges and rejections, each serving as a learning opportunity. His ability to build strong relationships and his innovative mindset have been key to his success. Sefa's leadership extends beyond his professional roles; he is deeply committed to uplifting the Pacific community through initiatives like the Pacific Business Collective and The Pacific peoples's Trust.

Nathan Lemalie
(Cleaning)

Nathan battled depression and self-doubt, struggling with self-worth and confidence. A friend helped him reframe his mindset, focus on small wins, and practice daily gratitude. Breaking the cultural stigma around talking about emotions was a major step in Nathan's growth.

Self Confidence and Growth Mindset

Pacific peoples are encouraged to build self-confidence in unfamiliar spaces. At the 2024 annual NZ PACIFICA INC meeting, female Pacific leaders from various sectors highlighted self-confidence as a significant barrier for Pacific women in the workplace. They emphasised the importance of Pacific women believing in themselves, even in unfamiliar environments. Confidence issues can often stem from expectations of humility and that challenging leaders is often viewed as disrespectful.

Pacific peoples often experience self-doubt in their abilities despite having a record of achievement or respect from peers. This internalised fear of being exposed as a 'fraud' is compounded by the pressure to represent their communities due to underrepresentation in corporate roles.

In many Pacific cultures, hierarchical structures often result in a diminished youth voice. This cultural dynamic can extend into the workplace, where young Pacific employees may hesitate to speak up, challenge the status quo, or share their accomplishments. This reluctance is especially evident in situations such as job interviews, presentations, and team meetings, where individuals may feel uncomfortable highlighting their strengths.

Employers are encouraged to note and recognise these as potential inhibitors and seek to understand the underlying reasons why some Pacific employees may be reluctant to pursue higher or leadership roles. Creating an environment that actively supports and encourages Pacific employees to step forward is critical to their growth and representation in leadership positions. Addressing financial growth and well-being across generations is seen by some in the workplace as a key strategy to alleviate these concerns. Encouraging an entrepreneurial mindset and providing opportunities to nurture entrepreneurship are also viewed as effective solutions.

Family influence & culture

Pacific culture

Cultural values and traditions are not only passed down but are also Pacific peoples's living and lived reality and therefore influences their interactions and decision-making. Connection to language, culture, and identity boosts confidence but also demonstrates to the Pacific employee that they are valued, as they are. It is also important for employers to understand cultural sensitivity, as highlighted by female PACIFICA INC leaders (2024), 'Language - culturally sensitive, for example the ways the Palagi see how it works for us, some things are tapu (sacred) in some pacific cultures but not in palagi world'.[26]

To fully understand the Pacific workforce is to recognise and incorporate shared values of Spirituality, Love, Respect, Family, Reciprocity, Consensus and collectivism into workplace environments and career pathways.

Diverse staff recruitment and cultural competency are crucial for inclusivity, increasing cultural awareness and transparency.

Family influence

Family is central to the Pacific workforce as it is integral to them and their day-to-day life.

Family influence in the Pacific context can be intergenerational and can significantly shape an individual's behaviours, decisions, and values. Career and education choices are often guided by family expectations, while educational support can include financial assistance and emotional encouragement. Understanding family dynamics and expectations are pivotal in shaping long-term personal and professional development.

In the educational provider space, providers have taken a leading role in integrating family involvement into the learner journey. By encouraging a family-like environment, they create a sense of familiarity and support that enhances trust and comfort. For example, encouraging the use of first names between students and staff helps to break down barriers and build rapport. Additionally, promoting family members to enrol together strengthens connections within the learning environment, making it more welcoming and supportive for students and their families. Involving the family allows educational providers to keep them informed about the learner's progress while also communicating provider expectations. This ensures that families can support learners by allowing them the time and space needed to focus on their studies.

Fainu'ulelei Aifa'i Esera
(Business & Professional)

Aifa'i's deep connection to his Samoan heritage and ancestors has shaped his mission in life. His career and leadership are driven by his desire to honour his family's legacy, and he actively works to create opportunities for Pacific communities through business and housing initiatives.

Salā Orion Tiatia
(Business & Professional)

One of Sala's defining moments was accepting his calling to support his family and community. This realisation propelled him to pursue business opportunities that not only provided financial stability but also created jobs and uplifted those around him. His dedication to his community is evident in his efforts to bridge gaps and provide opportunities for Māori and Pacific individuals.

Apulu Alo Aliitaeao (TJay) Asiata
(Business & Professional)

His leadership is rooted in a strong connection to family, prioritising his wife, kids, and well-being as the foundation for his success. He believes that focusing on home life leads to broader success in work.

26. Ringa Hora, "Ringa Hora report - PACIFICA INC: 46th National Conference and AGM". Ringa Hora WDC, 2024.

‘Unaloto (‘Una) Mataele

Aviation & Airport services

‘Unaloto (‘Una) Mataele (Aviation & Airport services)
Family as a motivator — family struggles in his early years in New Zealand were a major driving force behind Una’s determination to succeed. His family's support and his boss’ mentorship have been instrumental in his growth.

Pat Lapalapa

Real Estate

Pat is dedicated to creating pathways for Pacific individuals in the industry, advocating for financial literacy and ethical practices. As he continues to grow in his career, Pat remains grounded in his values, believing that treating others with respect and integrity will lead to lasting opportunities.

Career pathways & education

Alicia Bristowe
(Finance & Advisory)
Alicia's journey highlights the interplay between personal identity, cultural advocacy, and professional success. She is dedicated to increasing Māori and Pacific representation in finance, creating culturally safe workplaces, and showing that diverse pathways can lead to impactful careers in the sector.

Arieta Tubuka
(Aviation & Airport Services)
Encouraging Others to Follow Their Dreams - Arieta emphasises the importance of persistence and following your passion, regardless of the path you start on. She encourages others to go for their dreams and highlights the many career pathways in aviation.

Career pathways & qualifications

Pacific peoples want to see clear career pathways linked to education options to enable informed decisions of pathways they want to take.

Awareness of career options encourages an inclusive environment for Pacific peoples, especially with leadership opportunities. Industries that have clear pathways, champion continuous learning, and get involved in community outreach programmes and events to help promote career opportunities.

Tertiary training is often time-consuming and expensive, so providing information on education providers and emphasising practical training and real-world application can be an attractive option. Understanding employee rights and contracts is also important, especially for those entering the workforce.

Industries that recognise both informal and formal qualifications and provide access and training for those without prior experience not only enhance diversity in the workplace but also create equal opportunities.

Capability Building

Pacific businesses that embed Pacific values and culture into their practices place a strong emphasis on fostering relationships built on trust and collective support. These businesses often work as part of a network, sharing skills, capabilities, and resources to achieve common goals. For example, they may leverage each other's expertise when applying for funding, which helps address the common challenge faced by small business owners: balancing the time required to complete funding applications with managing daily operations. This collaborative approach enhances efficiency and strengthens the collective success of Pacific businesses.

Developing digital skills can streamline business processes and free up valuable time for Pacific business owners, allowing them to focus on strategic improvements and growth opportunities.

Dantē Fyfe
(Finance & Advisory)

As a financial advisor and co-founder of the Pacific Business Collective, Dantē is committed to building financial capability within Māori and Pacific communities. His work focuses on empowering individuals with financial knowledge and guiding them toward homeownership and business success.

Pat Lapalapa
(Real Estate)

As a real estate leader, Pat focuses on educating and mentoring Pacific individuals in the industry. He trains others in financial literacy and ethical real estate practices, helping them build long-term capabilities for career success and financial stability.

Fainu'ulelei Aifa'i Esera

Business & Professional

Through his business navigation role and initiatives like "Ready to Rent" and "Ready to Buy" workshops, Aifa'i actively helps Pacific individuals develop practical skills and financial literacy to improve their housing and economic opportunities.

Arieta Tubuka

Aviation & Airport Services

Encouraging others to follow their dreams - Arieta emphasises the importance of persistence and following your passion, regardless of the path you start on. She encourages others to go for their dreams and highlights the many career pathways in aviation.

Career aspirations

Leadership skills, opportunities & pay equity

Pacific peoples welcome leadership development opportunities. Increasing representation of Pacific peoples in leadership including at governance level is essential. Their strong relationship management skills are often overshadowed by perceptions about their strategic thinking abilities.

Credentials play a crucial role in pay and career advancement, often leaving those with practical experience but without formal qualifications at a disadvantage for leadership roles.

Pacific peoples are open to career development opportunities and value inclusivity. Organisations that support work-life balance, recognise and reward contributions, and establish mentorship programs have been proven to increase staff loyalty.

Pacific business owners within an Aotearoa New Zealand context

Pacific business owners' and/or entrepreneurs bring unique cultural perspectives and values to their enterprises, often emphasising community, collectivism, and service. These business owners navigate the challenges and opportunities of entrepreneurship while integrating Pacific cultural values into their operations. These businesses contribute significantly to the economy and play a vital role in economic development within their communities.

Delivering good service and generating wealth involves understanding the pros and cons of running a business. For example, lack of business financial know-how has often been a downfall for some Pacific businesses.

On the other hand, encouraging the use of social media to share Pacific success stories can inspire the next generation and is also being used more and more by business to create and be more visible to its market/communities.

The future aspiration for Pacific peoples is transitioning from consumers to creators, with an entrepreneurial mindset that values resourcefulness and innovation.

Ongoing guidance and mentoring are crucial, especially for startups with limited accounting skills. Providing on-the-job coaching, connecting with regional businesses, and working with community groups can support business growth. Addressing staff shortages and long hours is also essential to prevent burnout and stress.

Role models

Seeing Pacific succeed across disciplines inspires others and highlights the importance of vocal advocacy across industry. Webinars, personal stories and case studies of successful Pacific role models serve as valuable resources to encourage younger generations by showing them what is possible. Mentorship, leadership training, and support systems further empower Pacific peoples to overcome challenges and excel in their chosen careers.

The aging and volunteer workforce are equally important role model equation as Pacific wear many hats within the community.

Alicia Bristowe
(Finance & Advisory)

Alicia's journey highlights the interplay between personal identity, cultural advocacy, and professional success. She is dedicated to increasing Māori and Pacific representation in finance, creating culturally safe workplaces, and showing that diverse pathways can lead to impactful careers in the sector.

Apulu Alo Aliitaeao (TJay) Asiata
(Business & Professional)

'I'm a group CEO now. I sit on multiple boards and have scaled quite a few companies. I'm a fourth-year, fifth-form school student from Wesley College.'

Mele Peaua
(Cleaning)

Mele has contributed to developing NZQA cleaning unit standards. She trains and mentors new cleaners, focusing on practical skills and formal qualifications. Mele thrives in diversity by working with individuals from Aotearoa and other parts of the world.

Fred 'Ofa
(Real Estate & Property Management)

Fred is a trailblazing entrepreneur who blends business innovation with community impact. His leadership challenges industry norms by creating ownership opportunities, valuing cultural identity, and breaking down racial barriers. Through mentorship, flexible work models, and coaching, he is empowering the next generation of Māori and Pacific business leaders.

Cost & access

Barriers to opportunities and support for Pacific learners and workforce

Barriers to opportunities and support significantly hinder Pacific learners and workers from advancing in their careers. Limited access to educational resources, financial constraints, and a lack of culturally responsive mentorship can prevent Pacific peoples from pursuing further training or qualifications. In the workplace, systemic biases, unconscious bias, language challenges, and inadequate support networks either discourage or do not positively support Pacific employees in seeking leadership roles or career progression. These challenges not only limit skill development but also reduce confidence, making it harder for Pacific individuals to advocate for themselves and achieve long-term career success in their chosen fields. Addressing these barriers is essential for equitable career growth.

Fainu'ulelei Aifa'i Esera (Business & Professional)

Aifa'i is deeply committed to uplifting Pacific communities. His work bridges gaps between councils, businesses, and individuals, ensuring that Pacific business owners and families have access to opportunities. His "Ready to Rent" and "Ready to Buy" workshops equip people with practical knowledge to achieve stability.

The landscape has changed with demands for online courses and quicker programme completion to enter the workforce sooner. Cross-crediting skills can help individuals explore different career paths, while providing opportunities for upskilling and gaining a qualification. This helps organisations address skills and knowledge gaps quicker through the provision of tailored work-based training that is crucial for successful transitions into and within the workplace.

To support learners, some educational providers delivering training programmes offer a range of pastoral support including access to food and hardship funds. They've mentioned learners face major issues including transport costs, food and devices, and balancing study with family - work commitments, highlighting the need for flexible teaching methods such as part time study after hours to cater for those who are employed.

Arieta Tubuka (Aviation & Airport Services)

Overcoming barriers and breaking gender norms - As a woman in a male-dominated field, Arieta is motivated to prove herself and show that she can succeed in aviation, just like her male colleagues. She acknowledges the cultural barriers in her home country that hinder women from entering technical roles but credits her supportive family for helping her breakthrough these challenges

Procurement and funding

Greater access to mentoring, resources, and funding is needed, drawing on collective skillsets to support Pacific peoples. Financial assistance options like scholarships and cadetship programmes can address barriers for Pacific peoples accessing education and employment opportunities.

In terms of entrepreneurship and going into business, there is a need to access appropriate capital and support in capability building initiatives. Clear procurement and policy processes are essential. Cash flow challenges and upfront costs present barriers to business entry and retention, particularly in commission-based fields like real estate.

Teru Time (Finance & Advisory)

Encourages aspiring financial advisors to obtain the New Zealand Certificate in Financial Services (Level 5). He believes that both experience and qualifications are crucial for providing high-quality advice and maintaining industry standards.

Chantelle Schofield

Financial Advisory

Chantelle's journey is one of unexpected opportunities, cultural awareness, and a deep commitment to helping others. She is breaking barriers in the financial industry by mentoring, increasing Pacific and Māori representation, and ensuring financial advice is accessible to all.

Roschelle Marshall

Business & Professionals

Roschelle's aspirations revolve around supporting Pacific entrepreneurship and helping businesses use their platforms for social good. She advocates for a future where the strengths of Pacific peoples and communities are nurtured and amplified through collaboration and action.

Industry role & influence

Industry partnerships and support

Collaborations with industry and educational institutions provide practical training and job placements, such as internships, and simplifying immigration processes can improve access to work placements.

Work-based integrated learning and employer cultural awareness training is crucial for career development.

Strong partnerships across agencies and community providers offer comprehensive support and career pathways and an approach encouraged across the Service sector.

Fainu'ulelei Aifa'i Esera
(Business & Professional)

His career journey is a testament to his adaptability and determination. From selling newspapers as a child in Samoa to working for the Tauranga City Council for 12 years, Aifai has always sought ways to uplift his community. His current role involves supporting Pacific business owners, bridging gaps between councils, businesses, and the community, and ensuring that the aspirations of his ancestors are realised.

David Toko
(Business & Professional)

David is a strong advocate for mentorship and community support. He highlights the importance of seeking guidance and surrounding oneself with the right people. His role as a Business Connector emphasises helping small and medium enterprises succeed.

Faleomavaega Helen Karati
(Government)

Helen emphasises mentorship and strong support networks for professional growth. She is an advocate for storytelling and shared experiences to inspire others. Helen actively participates in initiatives like P.A.C.I.F.I.C.A Inc. and the Pacific Public Servants Network.

Navi Aujla
(Business & Professional)

Building strong relationships and valuing collective success over individual achievements. Emphasising empathy and support in business ventures.

CONCLUSION AND CALL TO ACTION

The insights gathered highlight the immense contributions of Pacific peoples in the service sector, alongside the challenges they face. By addressing these challenges and leveraging their unique strengths, we can create a more inclusive, equitable, and thriving workforce.

To move forward, we must take concrete actions across the following key areas:

1

Recognising the value of the Pacific workforce

- Employers should actively acknowledge and integrate Pacific cultural values into workplace environments.
- Organisations can foster inclusivity by promoting Pacific leadership and strengthening diversity initiatives.

2

Building skills and growth mindset

- Encourage self-confidence building and professional development through mentorship and targeted leadership programs.
- Create safe spaces that empower Pacific employees to contribute ideas, take on leadership roles, and embrace entrepreneurship.

3

Strengthening family and cultural connections

- Employers should develop culturally responsive policies that recognise the importance of family, church, and community commitments.
- Education and workplaces should incorporate Pacific cultural competencies to enhance learning and career progression.

4

Expanding career pathways and education access

- Industries need to outline clear career pathways and provide upskilling opportunities through formal and informal training.
- Employers should recognise and value both traditional qualifications and practical experience in recruitment and promotions.

A collective commitment for a thriving future

Real change requires collaborative action from employers, industry leaders, educators, and policymakers. Investing in Pacific peoples strengthens both their career prospects and the overall resilience of the service sector.

To drive meaningful progress, organisations should:

- Implement recommendations within workforce strategies.
- Strengthen industry collaboration for a unified approach to workforce development.
- Monitor progress to ensure Pacific workforce aspirations are met.

By taking these steps, we can create a more inclusive, capable, and thriving workforce in an evolving service sector.

Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework

By embracing the Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework approach, the industry can adopt more inclusive and sustainable models of engagement, particularly in areas where Pacific communities play a central role. The framework is a valuable tool for industries seeking to balance economic imperatives with cultural and social responsibilities.

As this document demonstrates, embedding these values not only benefits Pacific communities but also enriches the broader industry landscape through deeper connections, shared knowledge, and long-term sustainability.

5

Supporting capability and business growth

- Pacific businesses should be supported with financial literacy training, mentorship, and networking opportunities.
- Digital capability-building initiatives should be expanded to help Pacific entrepreneurs manage and grow their businesses efficiently.

6

Empowering career aspirations and leadership development

- Increase Pacific representation at leadership and governance levels through targeted programs.
- Provide role models, mentoring, and visibility of Pacific success stories to inspire the next generation.

7

Addressing barriers to cost and access

- Implement more financial assistance, scholarships, and flexible training options to remove economic barriers.
- Employers should offer work-based training and create culturally safe workplaces that foster Pacific workforce progression.

8

Enhancing industry collaboration and influence

- Strengthen industry partnerships with education providers, government agencies, and Pacific communities to create meaningful career opportunities.
- Promote employer awareness training on Pacific cultural values to ensure inclusive and equitable hiring/recruiting and career progression practices.

Note: For actions specific to Pacific Peoples across various industries, please refer to pages 38 to 55.

LOOKING AHEAD — A VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Embracing Pacific cultural strengths, addressing systemic barriers, and amplifying Pacific voices will unlock the full potential of Aotearoa's service sector. A coordinated effort among industries, communities, and policymakers will ensure equitable opportunities and sustainable growth.

Kele'a serves as both a call to action and a guide for advancing Pacific peoples in the workforce. By integrating inclusive strategies and vocational education, the sector can equip Pacific workers with lifelong skills, and a future where their contributions are fully recognised, valued, and celebrated.

For Industry leaders & employers:

How can your organisation integrate the Kele'a call to action to improve Pacific workforce retention and leadership opportunities?

What challenges do you currently face in creating culturally inclusive workplaces, and how might this report help address them?

What steps could your industry take to recognise and embed Pacific values into business operations for long-term success?

LOOKING AHEAD — A VISION FOR TRANSFORMATION

CONTINUED

For educational & training providers:

How can your programmes better align with the career aspirations of Pacific learners as outlined in the Kele'a report?

What barriers do you see in Pacific students transitioning from education to meaningful employment, and how can this report guide solutions?

How can your institution collaborate with industry and policymakers to ensure Pacific graduates are equipped with 'skills for life'?

For the Pacific community:

What cultural strengths do you think should be emphasised more in workplace settings, and how can this report help advocate for them?

How can businesses and policymakers better support Pacific workers in achieving career growth and leadership roles?

What aspects of Kele'a resonates most with your experiences in the workforce, and where do you see the biggest opportunities for change?

Key

Number of Pacific peoples employed

Percentage of total workforce

4,000
8%

Tourism & Travel

26,000
8%

Retail & Distribution

3,200
4%

Real Estate & Rental

15,000
7%

Hospitality & Food

4,000
22%

Security & Government

PACIF
INDUS

Pacific peo
up 9% of the c
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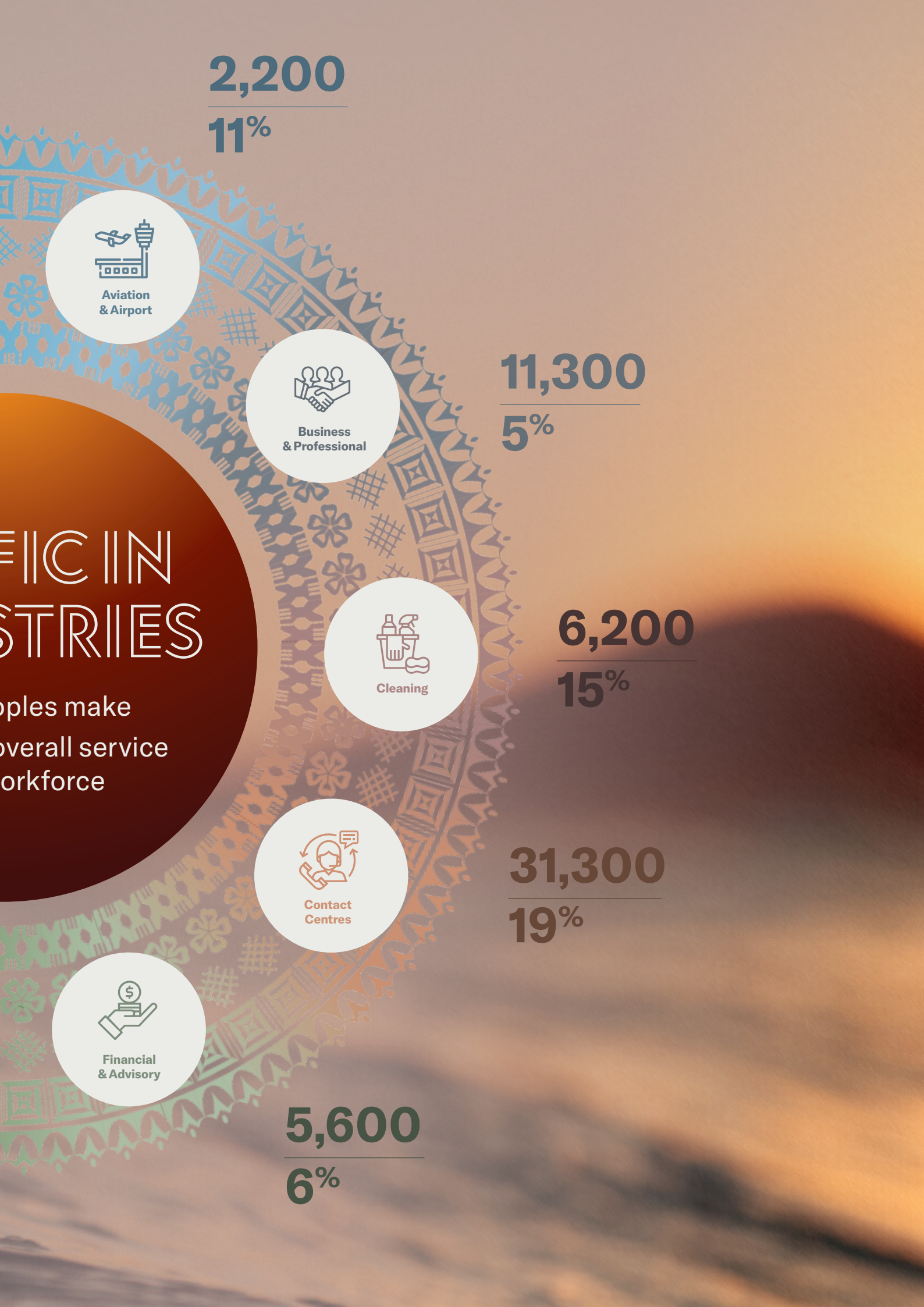
overall service
orkforce



3,200

Pacific peoples are employed in Real Estate roles

4%

of the total workforce

REAL ESTATE

3,200 Pacific peoples are employed in Real Estate and Property Management roles, representing 4% of the total workforce.

Cultural awareness

- Pacific peoples want to work in industries where they feel represented and where there is culturally receptive support.
- Encourage leadership to promote the strengths of a culturally diverse work environment. Promote the strength of religious and family values within the Pacific communities. And how this has a positive effect on the community.

Skill development initiatives

- Promote funding to support with soft skills. Encourage career progression and advancement into leadership roles.

Work-life balance

Real estate professionals often work weekends and evenings to accommodate client's schedules, making it difficult to maintain a work-life balance. This can be challenging when there is a strong expectation for many Pacific peoples to fulfill additional community commitments for beyond work. Encouraging recognition that family priorities may sometimes take precedence over work, potentially creating challenges. It is important for industry to cultivate a supportive workplace culture, that is aware of family commitments.

Managing multiple properties, dealing with difficult tenants or clients and meeting sales targets can lead to stress and burnout. It is important for industry to have tailored pastoral provision and supports in place which prevent this from happening.

CLEANING

6,200 Pacific peoples are employed in Cleaning roles, representing 15% of the total workforce.

Business ownership

Creating training opportunities for Pacific cleaners to own their own cleaning businesses is a powerful strategy to future-proof the industry and empower workers, especially in the face of technological advancements.

Tailored training

The cleaning industry benefits from a significant number of Pacific workers, many of whom are second-language English speakers. To fully support their growth, it is essential that training materials are tailored to meet their needs. By understanding and addressing the specific needs of Pacific workers, and offering other support such as pastoral care, the industry can effectively support and retain this workforce.

Pacific are visual people. To demonstrate competency, industry is strongly encouraged to consider use of technology, such as video recordings for training and assessment purposes.

Literacy and numeracy

Many Pacific workers have the industry experience and competency within their roles. In order for Pacific workers to pursue higher-level credentials and leadership roles, literacy and numeracy training opportunities in the industry need to be more accessible.

Cultural sensitivity and respect

Ensuring workplaces are inclusive of Pacific cultural practices and traditions, including appropriate observance of culturally significant events.

Providing cultural competency training for employers and managers to better understand and support Pacific workers.

6,200

Pacific peoples are employed in Cleaning roles

15%

of the total workforce

31,300

Pacific peoples are employed in Contact Centre roles

19%

of the total workforce

CONTACT CENTRES

31,300 Pacific peoples are employed in Contact Centre roles, representing 19% of the total workforce.

Career pathways

Contact centres have a high proportion of Pacific workers, compared to both the Service sector more broadly and the New Zealand workforce.
The industry provides clear pathways to leadership and managerial roles which provides opportunities for Pacific peoples in terms of career progression and skill development.

Accessibility of training

The industry has a high proportion of Pacific workers, some of whom are second-language English speakers. However, this is not taken into account for training material and qualification requirements, particularly for literacy and numeracy, as these are often written in a way that does not resonate with Pacific workers. These requirements often mean that training and development opportunties are not always accessible and this can prevent Pacific workers from successfully pursuing higher level credentials and leadership roles. Therefore, it is important for industry to better understand the needs of their workers and also ensure that tailored training is offered to Pacific workers, along with pastoral care; both have been identified as critical to supporting and retaining kaimahi of Pacific descent.

Values-based work

The industry is well aligned with Pacific values, particularly its focus on assisting others, and working collaboratively as a team. Having a high proportion of Pacific peoples enables contact centres to better understand and reflect the needs of their increasingly diverse customers.

Cultural sensitivity and respect

Ensuring workplaces are inclusive of Pacific cultural practices and traditions, including appropriate observance of cultural holidays and ceremonies. Providing cultural competency training for employers and managers to better understand and support Pacific workers.

For Pacific communities, cultural competency extends beyond understanding cultural practices. It involves recognising and aligning with core values that uplift organisational capabilities. This approach fosters an environment where all employees feel valued, heard, and seen, promoting continuous improvement and inclusivity.

FINANCIAL ADVISORY

5,600 Pacific peoples are employed in Financial Advisory roles, representing 6% of the total workforce.

The Pacific workforce in financial advisory services in New Zealand is small, but there is growing demand for their expertise to serve the increasing Pacific population in New Zealand. Pacific advisors bring cultural understanding, fostering trust and providing tailored advice. Their presence increases diversity, serves as role models, and encourages youth. Addressing education, training, and cultural competence challenges is essential to meet the needs of the Pacific population and to ensure the sector's growth and impact.

Cultural awareness

Pacific peoples want to work in industries where they feel represented and where there is culturally receptive support.

Encourage leadership to promote the strengths of a culturally diverse work environment. Promote the strength of religious and family values within the Pacific communities. And how this has a positive effect on the community.

Skill development initiatives

Promote funding and initiatives to support with soft skills. Encourage career progression and advancement into leadership roles.

Attraction into the industry

The financial advisory industry is an attractive and essential career choice for Pacific peoples. With a growing Pacific population and increasing needs the need to protect and grow family assets, there is a rising demand growing need for financial literacy and security advice. For example, understanding how insurance provides peace of mind during prosperous times good times and protection during adversity is crucial. To meet the needs of the future Pacific population, an increased Pacific workforce in this sector is necessary.

5,600

Pacific peoples are employed in Financial Advisory roles

6%

of the total workforce

15,000

Pacific peoples are employed in Hospitality & Food roles

7%

of the total workforce

HOSPITALITY & FOOD SERVICES

15,000 Pacific peoples are employed in Hospitality & Food Service roles, representing 7% of the total workforce.

Collaboration

Economic collaboration within the Pacific hospitality industry focuses on strengthening economic connections and partnerships across different Pacific nations. This means working together to improve trade, investment, and opportunities across the Pacific. Improving Economic Performance. By improving the movement of people, goods, and services throughout the Pacific, we can lift the economic performance of the Pacific Hospitality industry. This means more jobs, better businesses, and stronger economies. Simplifying immigration and visa processes can make it easier for workers to move between countries for work placements.

Sharing knowledge and resources: Collaborating economically allows Pacific nations to share resources, knowledge, and skills. This can lead to better management of resources and more innovative solutions to common problems. Developing technology solutions can improve cross-country relationships and ongoing communication.

Pacific small businesses

Many hospitality businesses in the Pacific are SMEs. Economic collaboration can provide these businesses with the training and support they need to grow and succeed on a larger scale. Conduct needs assessments to identify what's working well, gaps, and region-specific needs.

Strengthening Relationships

Networking relationships focus on building and maintaining connections among hospitality professionals, associations, and organisations across the Pacific region. This includes creating opportunities for these groups to collaborate and support each other empowering Pacific groups to share successful strategies and practices and supporting increased innovation.

Industry wide relationships across the Pacific can open career opportunities for hospitality workers by connecting them with a wider pool of potential employers and training programmes. Developing a database of best practices and information will inform decisions and strategies as well as provide a platform for staff-sharing opportunities during off-seasons.

RETAIL AND DISTRIBUTION

26,000 Pacific peoples are employed in Retail and Distribution roles, representing 8% of the total workforce.

Cultural awareness

Encourage leadership to promote the strengths of a culturally diverse work environment. Promote the strength of religious and family values within the Pacific communities. And how this has a positive effect on the community.

Balancing work and family

Encouraging recognition that family priorities may sometimes take precedence over work, potentially creating challenges. Encourage the importance of a supportive workplace culture, that is aware of family commitments.

Talent and recognition

Encourage leadership to identify talent and move towards upskilling quickly to build confidence in learners. Sometimes the learners are too humble to put their own hand up for recognition and opportunities.

Skill development initiatives

Promote funding to support with soft skills and English where needed. Encourage career progression and advancement into leadership roles.

26,000

Pacific peoples are employed in Retail and Distribution roles

8%

of the total workforce

4,000

Pacific peoples are employed in Security roles

22%

of the total workforce

SECURITY

4,000 Pacific peoples are employed in Security roles, representing 22% of the total workforce.

Understanding your workforce

The Security industry benefits from a significant number of Pacific workers, some of whom are second-language English speakers. This aspect is often not considered for training material and qualification requirements, particularly for literacy and numeracy, as these are frequently written in a way that does not resonate with Pacific workers. In order for Pacific workers to pursue higher-level credentials and leadership roles, literacy and numeracy training opportunities in the industry need to be more accessible. To fully support Pacific growth, it is essential that training materials are tailored to meet individual needs. By understanding and addressing the specific needs of Pacific workers and offering additional support such as pastoral care, the industry can effectively support and retain this workforce.

Supporting the needs of the workforce

To progress within the industry, security workers are required to obtain a license, which is a key step toward advancing their careers. However, the upfront costs of the licensing process are often covered by the workers themselves, which can create barriers to access. Increasing opportunities to make obtaining a licence more accessible and affordable, can empower Pacific workers to pursue higher-level credentials, enabling them to advance and continue contributing to the industry's success.

Recognition and purpose

Pacific peoples in the industry bring valuable experience and competency to their roles. Recognising these skills beyond traditional qualifications is essential for ensuring that Pacific workers are truly valued and appreciated. By acknowledging and celebrating their contributions, the industry can support their career development and empower them to grow within their roles.

TOURISM AND TRAVEL

4,000 Pacific peoples are employed in Tourism and Travel roles, representing 8% of the total workforce.

The impact of Covid-19 resulting in job loss and the low proportion of Pacific in the Tourism workforce is showing little to no signs of recovery. Similar to Manaakitanga, Pacific peoples are renowned for their values, which place importance on caring for guests and hospitality, providing an avenue to attract the Pacific workforce. Ensuring the industry is a viable career option and an attractive industry to work in for Pacific peoples can assist in growing the Pacific workforce and increasing the genuine and authentic dimension of tourism and travel services.

Cultural responsiveness

Ensuring the industry is receptive and responsive to cultural aspects of the Pacific workforce can increase the appeal of the industry to Pacific peoples and grow the workforce.

Skills development

Identifying where existing skills can be acknowledged and where skills can be developed further to encourage an agile Pacific workforce.

Enriching careers

Working with Pacific communities to understand how tourism skills sets are transferable within New Zealand and across the Pacific can contribute to the wider Pacific workforce.

4,000

Pacific peoples are employed in Tourism and Travel roles

8%

of the total workforce

Acknowledgements

Kele'a is born from the many voices, the shared wisdom, and the deep talanoa gifted by our Pacific communities and industries across the Service sector. With hands open and hearts full, we honour those who have welcomed us — who have shared their spaces, their stories, and their dreams. Through fono, talanoa, and gathering, you have shaped this journey.

To you, our industries, our providers, our workers, and our learners — we offer our deepest gratitude.

Relationships & Engagement
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Mel Harrington, Magele Maria Uluilelata

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Moses 'Alatini

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Talia Momoiseā, Alastair Bull

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Nuugalo Jacinta Mauga

Limitations

Tangata Whaikaha (People with Disabilities)
We acknowledge that data and knowledge on Tāngata Whaikaha is limited overall, let alone for our Pacific peoples. It is important that we create more growth opportunities within the sector for our Tāngata Whaikaha workforce.

It is envisaged that Kele'a will continue to be a resource that is updated on a regular basis as we gather more workforce data and insights about Pacific peoples in the service sector especially workplace examples and initiatives that address barriers and advance career aspirations. Workplace examples would include attraction, recruitment, retention, career pathways and investment in training and development for Pacific peoples in the sector.

RINGA HORA
Services
Workforce Development Council