

10 May 2024

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Mālō 'e lelei

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## RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST (REF: DOIA064-2023/24)

Thank you for your emails dated 15 February 2024 and 21 March 2024 requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), information regarding the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' (the Ministry) Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB).

Please be advised that your emails were sent to an inbox which was not actively being monitored. Therefore, we only became aware of your request on 2 May 2024. We apologise for any inconvenience our delay in responding may have caused. I have outlined your requests and my response below.

1. Are you able to confirm that [this document](#) (accessed via MPP's current LTIB webpage) is the final version of MPP's inaugural LTIB?
2. If yes, are you able to provide a copy of, or link to, MPP's draft LTIB that was released as part of the second round of public consultation?

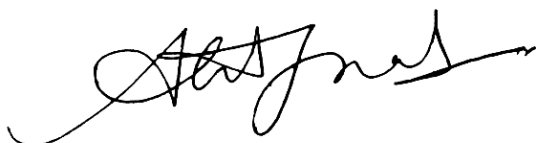
Note that the Ministry's LTIB webpage which you refer to, previously featured the draft copy of the LTIB that was released as part of the second round of public consultation. The Ministry's [LTIB webpage](#) has now been updated with the final version of the LTIB. I have enclosed a copy of the draft LTIB per your request.

In line with standard OIA practice, the Ministry proactively publishes some of its responses to OIA requests. As such, this letter may be published on the Ministry for Pacific Peoples' website. Your personal details will be removed, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you or your organisation.

Should you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact the Ministry at: [oi\\_a\\_requests@mpp.govt.nz](mailto:oi_a_requests@mpp.govt.nz).

If you are dissatisfied with this response, you have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or freephone 0800 802 602.

Mālō 'aupito

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ali Ajmal', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ali Ajmal  
**Deputy Secretary**  
**Office of the Secretary**



# Long-Term Insights Briefing 2022

Improving Pacific Data Equity:  
Opportunities to enhance the future of Pacific wellbeing

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# Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>02</b>
A system of inequity – Pacific data inequities in government’s data .....	02
Realising Pacific data equity .....	03
<b>Chapter 1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>04</b>
Long-term Insights Briefings .....	06
Scope and process of our LTIB .....	06
Public consultation on the topic – November 2022 .....	06
Te Tiriti o Waitangi .....	07
Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa .....	08
Pacific Wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand .....	10
<b>Chapter 2: Unpacking the use of Pacific data across government –</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>How is it done and why does it matter?</b> .....	
Current government data collection processes .....	11
The classification of Pacific Peoples in the census has changed overtime .....	14
The 2018 Census .....	16
Integrated Data Infrastructure .....	16
Ethnicity data in national surveys, administrative data and government research .....	17
<b>Chapter 3: Talanoa ‘a Kainga – Insights about Pacific Data Equity</b> .....	<b>21</b>
What is Pacific data? .....	21
What is Pacific data equity? .....	22
Understanding the current barriers to Pacific data equity using the Kakala framework .....	22
Talanoa ‘a kāinga – perspectives and experiences of Pacific data inequities .....	24
Teu: Inequity in data design .....	26
Toli: Inequity in government data collection methods .....	30
Tui: Inequity in data analysis .....	34
Luva: Inequity in data access .....	37
Mālie mo e Māfana: Inequity in data evaluation .....	41
<b>Chapter 4: Realising Pacific data equity</b> .....	<b>44</b>
Focus Area 1: Collaborate and partner with Pacific peoples and communities .....	44
Focus Area 2: All-of-Government approach to Pacific data .....	45
Focus Area 3: Accountability and evaluation .....	48
Time for Change .....	48



# Executive Summary

The Ministry has chosen the topic *Improving Pacific data equity: opportunities to enhance Pacific wellbeing*, for our first Long-Term Insights Briefing (LTIB). Pacific data equity is a significant system issue that impacts the lives of Pacific peoples in many ways.

Every day government makes decisions that impact on peoples' lives. These decisions are influenced by various factors such as political priorities, budget and other resource constraints, and issues of public importance. Importantly, these decisions are also influenced and informed by data.

Data, in its simplest form, is any type of information that is collected to help decision-making. In government, data is used to inform all types of decision making including what public goods and services to invest in, policy making, programme interventions and future planning.

This briefing explores government's current data eco-system and how past and present ways of collecting, processing, analysing and interpreting data has led to inequities for Pacific peoples.

Pacific peoples are an integral part of Aotearoa and actively contribute to the social, economic, and cultural fabric of Aotearoa New Zealand. Pacific populations are a diverse, youthful and fast-growing population.<sup>1</sup> The youthful structure of the Pacific population means that Pacific peoples will play an integral role in the country's future because Aotearoa New Zealand's general population is an ageing one. Therefore, the wellbeing now and into the future of Pacific peoples will have an increasingly significant increasing impact on the future of all of Aotearoa.

## A system of inequity – Pacific data inequities in government's data

In this briefing, we firstly explore how government has collected data in the past for different population groups and how these processes and practices have evolved over time.

We use the Kakala framework, which draws on the Tongan practice of garland making, to explore the issues with government's present data collection system. The different stages of the data cycle are overlaid with the kakala making process to demonstrate the issues that currently exist and that have contributed to inequities in Pacific data. Some of the most significant issues that will be discussed include:

- the absence of Pacific worldviews in data design
- the deficit positioning of the data for Pacific peoples
- undercount of Pacific peoples in official statistics and what this means
- inadequate consideration of appropriate collection methods/methodologies to support Pacific peoples' participation
- insufficient consideration of appropriate cultural methods to analyse Pacific data to reflect key issues for Pacific peoples

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-ethnic-group-summaries/pacific-peoples>



- lack of Pacific data professionals in the workforce
- little to no consideration of appropriate ways to disseminate Pacific data beyond conventional or standard reports (which are not accessed or accessible for Pacific peoples) deficiencies in evaluating the quality of Pacific data

The inequities in Pacific data manifest in different ways, and at all stages of the data system. Most significantly, the stories or the narrative of the data does not represent the realities experienced by Pacific peoples and the way in which their stories have been told through data have had significant implications for Pacific peoples.

## Realising Pacific data equity

As we continue to move into a digitally advanced future, the importance and the reliance on data will only continue to expand, and we need to ensure that data properly reflects the lives and journeys of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This briefing sets out the critical importance of achieving Pacific data equity into the future. The Pacific population is growing and diversifying significantly. Pacific peoples currently make up 8 per cent of the total population (381,642) and projected to comprise 11 per cent of the population by 2043.<sup>2</sup> Further, in a rapidly digitally advanced future, issues with Pacific data equity will continue to surface as government moves to online storing, collecting and providing information to the public. The inevitable shifts to a digital future will create some significant issues for Pacific peoples who face acute levels of digital exclusion and barriers to access that will hinder their participation in online data collection processes.

This briefing outlines the significant challenges and issues that persist across government that are contributing to the current inequities that Pacific peoples face. While the road to Pacific data equity is long, this paper outlines three key focus areas that support a direction of travel to achieving data equity in the future.

### Focus Area 1: Collaborate and partner with Pacific peoples and communities

- An important step forward requires greater and more meaningful partnership and collaboration with the Pacific peoples and communities. This includes investing in providing the right tools for Pacific peoples and communities to support increased data literacy and enabling Pacific-led and driven data collection processes.

### Focus Area 2: All-of-Government approach to Pacific data

- In order to action true change, we see a critical need for an all-of-government approach to enable material changes to be made to the data system. There is existing work across government that will play an important contributing role to achieving Pacific data equity in future. However, there is a need for greater collaboration with Pacific data experts and communities to inform a data system that is reflective and responsive to the needs of Pacific peoples.

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<sup>2</sup> Statistics New Zealand, Pacific Peoples ethnic group, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-ethnic-group-summaries/pacific-peoples>



## Focus Area 3: Accountability and evaluation

- A critical lever for change is through the establishment of an All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Outcomes Framework that includes a set of Pacific wellbeing indicators and measures to monitor the impact of agencies' Pacific programmes and projects.

# Chapter 1: Introduction

The Ministry's inaugural LTIB topic, Improving Pacific data equity: opportunities to enhance Pacific wellbeing, reflects the significance of data equity as a significant system issue for Pacific communities.

Generations of Pacific peoples have migrated to and are now settled in Aotearoa and these cycles of migration and settling are an integral part of the story of this country. Pacific peoples brought with them their unique principles and values, and while they have acquired and grafted new values or reimagined existing values in different contexts, Pacific peoples have retained elements of their core collective identities and the story of Pacific peoples in New Zealand continues to evolve.

Data is a critical part of how the stories of Pacific peoples are told. For many years, we have heard that government systems and practices of data collection are not reflective of the realities of Pacific peoples or of their voices. We have also heard of the impact of these systems and processes and their role in perpetuating the inequities that Pacific communities continue to face.

The focus of this LTIB is on how we might achieve data equity in government systems and practices to ultimately improve the wellbeing for Pacific people in Aotearoa.

This LTIB paper is divided into four broad areas:

1. Understanding Pacific peoples and Pacific perspectives on wellbeing.
2. Defining Pacific data, and Pacific data equity to inform an examination into the past and present practices in the government system.
3. Identifying the key issues relating to Pacific data establishing that the status quo is inequitable for Pacific peoples.
4. Outlining potential issues.





## The Ministry for Pacific Peoples Te Manatū mō ngā iwi ō te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples is the Crown's principal advisor on policies and interventions aimed at improving outcomes for Pacific peoples. The Ministry leads all-of-government policy programmes including the Pacific Wellbeing Strategy, the Pacific Languages Strategy, Fale mo Aiga Pacific Housing Strategy, and the Pacific Employment Action Plan; and collaborates with and influences the policy work of other government agencies. The Ministry also delivers its own programmes including Toloa, Tupu Aotearoa, Kau Tuli, Prime Minister's Pacific Youth Awards, Pacific Language Weeks, Pacific Business Village, Pacific Housing initiatives, and initiatives supporting Pacific prosperity through social enterprise. Our extensive networks and relationships with Pacific communities across Aotearoa New Zealand<sup>3</sup> are critical for sharing valuable ideas and insights so the Ministry can meaningfully influence and lead on public policy decisions and the design, and delivery, of programmes and services for Pacific peoples.

The aspirations of Pacific peoples are captured in the Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou report. This report reflects a year-long talanoa process in 2018 with approximately 2,500 Pacific people across Aotearoa New Zealand. As a result of these engagements, the following Lalanga Fou vision statement was established and this guides the development of our LTIB:

*"Pacific values are our anchor, with each generation weaving the foundations for the next to stand on. Pacific communities are leading innovations within Aotearoa, the region and the world. We are confident in our endeavours and a thriving, resilient, and prosperous Pacific Aotearoa."*

The Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou report also articulated four goal areas that communities identified as being critical to them and their future:

- Thriving Pacific languages, cultures and identities.
- Prosperous Pacific communities.
- Resilient and healthy Pacific Peoples.
- Confident, thriving and resilient Pacific young people.

The Ministry's foundation to progressing the Lalanga Fou goals is found in the All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Strategy (the Strategy) which weaves together and strengthens strategic leadership, advice, policies and programmes across government in alignment with the aspirations of Pacific peoples captured in the Lalanga Fou report as well as in other key strategic documents.

The Strategy is made up of four connected focus areas designed to enable all parts of Government to work together on progressing the vision and goals of Lalanga Fou. The focus areas are Pacific values and principles; partnership and governance; performance and improvement; and capability.

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<sup>3</sup> The terms Aotearoa and New Zealand are both used in this document.



## Long-Term Insights Briefings

The Public Service Act 2020 requires government departments to develop and publish a LTIB at least once every three years. The LTIB's prepared in 2022 are the first to be produced by government departments in New Zealand. LTIBs are intended to provide a long-term outlook on potential risks and opportunities that may affect Aotearoa New Zealand in the medium to long term.

### Scope and process of our LTIB

Our LTIB focuses on Pacific data equity within the context of government systems and practices in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In choosing the topic for our inaugural LTIB, the Ministry chose to focus on an area that will be of particular importance to Pacific peoples now and into the future. The topic of improving Pacific data equity was chosen and tested with Pacific communities through public consultation from December 2021 to February 2022. At the close of consultation, we received ten submissions from across government agencies, community groups, data groups and independent submissions.

### Public consultation on the topic – November 2020

The submissions overall supported the topic with most responses noting that there are issues with current government Pacific data that is deficit-based and that do not reflect Pacific communities' resilience and resourcefulness. The submissions noted systemic gaps that need to be addressed and the need for Pacific data to be framed by Pacific methods and frameworks and that Pacific peoples must be involved at all stages.

### Gathering evidence for a deeper exploration of the topic

To develop the content of the briefing, we drew on multiple sources of information including feedback on the subject matter from the first consultation, findings from a literature review, discussions from Pacific and indigenous data experts, talanoa 'a kāinga within our Ministry and across other agencies and desktop reviews of the data system and issues.

We began with a talanoa 'a kāinga process. Derived from the Tongan practice 'Fofola e falá kae talanoa e kāingá' which means laying out the mat (fala) for the families (kāinga) to talk (talanoa) with purpose. The talanoa 'a kāinga process was our approach to creating space for participants to share openly about their views and experiences.

Through the talanoa 'a kāinga process, we engaged with 124 participants including 38 public servants from 15<sup>4</sup> agencies and 86 Ministry staff from across 21 different teams.

Our approach to the LTIB considered the following 3 key objectives:

- Understand the impacts of historical and current government data systems and practices regarding Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, New Zealand.
- Understanding Pacific data and equity in government and their relationship to Pacific well-being.
- Describing the road to Pacific data equity in government and its contribution to Pacific well-being.

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4 Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Office of Disabilities prior to Ministry of Disabled Peoples, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Development, Stats NZ, Te Hīringa Hauora/Health Promotion Agency, Te Puni Kōkiri, Oranga Tamariki, Department of Corrections, Mana Tū Wāhine/Ministry for Women, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of Health, Tertiary Education Commission, The Treasury NZ, New Zealand Qualification Authority.



From these objectives, the following open-ended questions were developed for discussion during the talanoa 'a kāinga:

- What types of Pacific data does your team collect/use to inform the work that you currently do?
- How would you define Pacific data and Pacific data equity? Please provide examples.
- What is needed to ensure Pacific data equity in Government?
- To your knowledge, how has Government or your Ministry historically collected Pacific data?
- What is the existing relationship between Pacific data equity and Pacific wellbeing?
- What does the future look like when we've achieved Pacific data equity and wellbeing in Government data systems and practices in 20 years' time?

### Preparing a LTIB for public consultation – November 2022

To prepare this briefing, we have drawn on multiple sources including feedback from the first public consultation, findings from our literature review, discussions with Pacific and indigenous data experts, talanoa 'a kāinga with MPP and other agencies, and desktop reviews of the data system and issues.

### Te Tiriti o Waitangi

The Ministry recognises that Māori/Tangata Whenua and Pacific peoples/Tāngata Moana, share ancient whakapapa linkages that have existed for millennia before the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Māori graciously acknowledge Pacific peoples as 'tuakana' or the elder siblings in this ancient relationship and themselves as 'teina/ taina' the younger siblings. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori are 'Tangata Whenua' or 'tuakana' and Pacific peoples are 'teina' or 'Tāngata Tiriti'.

Te Manatū o ngā Iwi o Te Moananui-ā-Kiwa aims to role model honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi for Pacific communities, to acknowledge Tangata Whenua as tangata taketake, the indigenous peoples and to recognise their integral contribution to the building of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Māori and Pacific peoples have an ongoing relationship that extends beyond time and space. They have shared whakapapa, taonga, values, and principles. They share a growing number of people who identify as both Māori and Pacific. According to the 2018 census, of the 26 per cent of Pacific people who identify with two ethnicities, nine per cent identify as Pacific and Māori.<sup>5</sup> They have also shared experiences with data inequities that have impacted their wellbeing and, in many ways, have shaped historical and current outcomes. These shared aspects demonstrate the value of this paper not only for Pacific peoples but for Māori as well because, ultimately, if Pacific data equity is improved, it will improve both Māori and Pacific statistics and narratives that can shape the future.

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<sup>5</sup> Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Pacific Aotearoa Status Report: A snapshot, 29 – 30.



## Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa

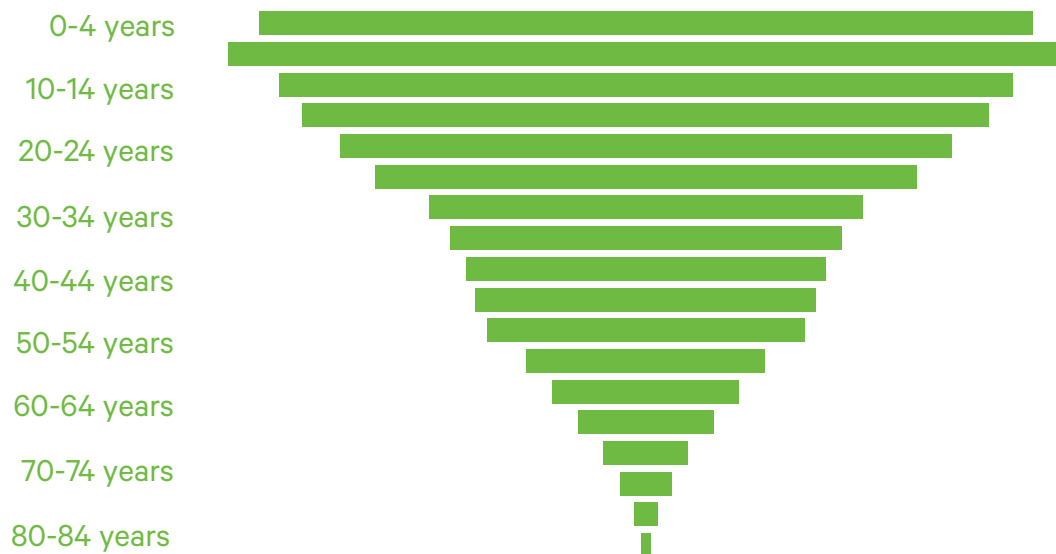
Pacific peoples make up 8 per cent of the Aotearoa New Zealand population. That equates to 381,642 people who identify themselves as being Pacific as at 2018. There are now over 17 Pacific ethnic groups residing here each with their own language, culture, migration and settlement stories. The 10 largest Pacific populations are: Samoan (47.9 per cent), Tongan (21.6 per cent), Cook Islands Māori (21.1 per cent), Niuean (8.1 per cent), Fijian (5.2 per cent), Tokelauan (2.3 per cent), Tuvaluan (1.2 per cent), i-Kiribati (0.8 per cent), Tahitian (0.5 per cent) and Papua New Guinean (0.3 per cent).

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
																	N/A
Samoa	Tongan	Cook Islands Maori	Niuean	Fijian	Tokelauan	Tuvaluan	i-Kiribati	Tahitian	Papua New Guinean	Ni Vanuatu	Rotuman	Indigenous Australian	Solomon Islander	Hawaiian	Pitcairn Islander	Nauruan	Other
182721	82389	80532	30867	19722	8676	4653	3225	1737	1131	990	981	795	777	429	216	135	3060
47.9%	21.6%	21.1%	8.1%	5.2%	2.3%	1.2%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.05%	0.03%	0.8%

All 17 distinct Pacific groups have seen growth since the last census count. The top five ethnic groups with the biggest growth are Ni Vanuatu, who have more than doubled in number since the last census (101.2 per cent growth), i-Kiribati (52.5 per cent growth), Papua New Guinean (40.1 per cent growth), Tongan (36.6 per cent growth) and Fijian (36.5 per cent growth).

The Pacific population is a young population with a median age of 23 years. Thirty-four per cent are aged under 15 years compared to five per cent aged 65 years and over. The Pacific population is the youngest population in comparison to other ethnic groups. Its median age of 23 years is younger than the Māori median age of 25.4 years, 31.3 years for Asian and 41.4 years for European.

Figure 1: Age distribution of Pacific peoples, 2018 census





Pacific peoples have the third highest number of bilingual speakers in Aotearoa New Zealand with more than a third of its population stating that they speak two languages. There are 37.8 per cent of Pacific people who are bilingual speakers in Aotearoa New Zealand. In comparison, 19.7 per cent of the Māori population speak two languages and 7.8 per cent of the European population are bilingual speakers. The Samoan language has the highest number of speakers (50.4 per cent), followed by Kiribati language (50 per cent), Tuvaluan language (48.3 per cent), Tongan language (40.1 per cent), Rotuman language (34 per cent) and Fijian language (23.7 per cent). The realm country languages of Tokelauan, Niuean and Cook Islands Māori have the least percentage of speakers (23.3 per cent, 12.2 per cent and 9 per cent respectively).

While Pacific populations are thriving, Pacific peoples continue to experience persistent inequities and socio-economic issues compared to other population groups. Current data shows that:

- Pacific people experience a heavier burden of illnesses and health problems<sup>6</sup> than others in Aotearoa New Zealand. Obesity among Pacific adults is the highest of all ethnic groups with Pacific peoples 2.3 times as likely to be obese compared to non-Pacific adults.<sup>7</sup>
- Twenty-four percent of Pacific people (compared with 8.5 per cent of Europeans) report not having enough money to meet their everyday needs<sup>8</sup>.
- Pacific peoples have the lowest rate of home ownership compared to other ethnic groups in New Zealand. Around 21 per cent of Pacific peoples own their own home compared to 52 per cent of the total population.<sup>9</sup>
- Around 4 in 10 Pacific people (compared to around 1 in 9 for the general population) live in crowded homes with 46 per cent of Pacific people living in damp houses (compared with 24 per cent overall)<sup>10</sup>.
- Pacific peoples earn a median income of \$24,300 which is lower than the median income for the total population of \$31,800.<sup>11</sup>
- The biggest gender and ethnic pay gap in Aotearoa New Zealand is between European men and Pacific women at 27 per cent, and Pacific men at 22 per cent.<sup>12</sup>

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6 Ministry of Health, Key Indicators, 2019/20

7 Pacific Aotearoa Status Report 2020

8 Pacific Perspectives, 2019

9 Pacific Aotearoa Status Report 2020

10 Statistics New Zealand, Census 2018

11 Pacific Aotearoa Status Report 2020

12 New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2020



## Pacific Wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand

*Mai na matua, mo ki tatou, ki na fanau*

*Learning from yesterday, living today, and hope for the future<sup>13</sup>.*

Perspectives from across the Pacific population inform our current understanding of Pacific wellbeing. The wellbeing of Pacific peoples, families and communities is expressed both personally and as vastly as the cosmos. When we experience wellbeing, we connect to and pass on rich data from our Pacific ancestors to our kāinga alive today, and we ensure that there are generations of our people into the future.

Wellbeing has been defined academically, but it is only complete with the views of knowledge holders within Pacific cultures and communities. Faith and spirituality are an important part of this. A rigorous definition of Pacific wellbeing requires authentic engagement with Pacific communities who are the knowledge holders and experts of their own lived realities, aspirations, and innovative practices acknowledge that wellbeing grows through a diversity of views and approaches including perspectives from poetry, song, dance, spirituality, proverbs, parables, metaphors, lived experiences and observations, symbology, imagery and literature, and science across the breadth and depths of Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa.

We understand that intergenerational wellbeing thrives when the breadth and multiple dimensions of Pacific Aotearoa feel included. We are reminded that acts of restoration are gifts to future wellbeing as they heal past trauma. And finally, we asked the community what success looks like when the system and Government is working well for them. They told us – come together into our world, come to us often, listen, work together, be consistent and achieve the results.

To acknowledge the complexity and diversity within Pacific Aotearoa, we must ensure that outcomes are equitable and enduring, and inclusive and responsive to diverse Pacific communities across physical, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions.

Data is an important way to tell the story of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. It informs the indicators and measures generally used to describe the wellbeing of Pacific peoples. However, what we have heard is that it measures Pacific peoples against mainstream markers of success, based on a Euro-centric worldview, which provides a largely deficit-based view of Pacific peoples.

Therefore, some of the key questions that will be explored in this briefing include:

- What story would the data tell if it is based on concepts, indicators and measures of wellbeing that are defined by Pacific people?
- What would data tell us if it is collected in ways that enable the full involvement of Pacific peoples, and interpreted in ways that reflect their worldviews?
- What impact could this have on Pacific people's wellbeing?

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<sup>13</sup> Alagakupu Tokelau that guides the Pacific Wellbeing Strategy



# Chapter 2: Unpacking the use of Pacific data across government – how is it done and why does it matter?

Every day, governments make decisions that affect the lives of people. Although government decision-making is influenced by various factors, such as fluctuating political climates, budget constraints and interest groups, data is crucial in informing decisions and demonstrating the effect they have on people. Data constitutes an important link between government and the people it serves, as the data drives government’s decision-making that contributes to peoples’ wellbeing.

Data are facts and statistics collected for reference or analysis. Data constitutes information when knowledge is applied to it – when it is structured, processed, analysed, given context and interpreted.<sup>14</sup> Stats NZ defines data as any type of information that is collected in order to be categorised, analysed, and/or used to help decision-making<sup>15</sup>, and emphasises that accurate, relevant and meaningful data should inform the government’s work.

## Current government data collection processes

Current government data is collected primarily through the census and national surveys, as well as through administrative processes and research and evaluations conducted by government agencies. These types of data are outlined below.

Since 1851, Stats NZ has been conducting a **Census** every five years to provide a snapshot of the total number of people in New Zealand on census night. While overseas visitors and residents are included in the census, New Zealand residents who are not in the country on census night, are not included.<sup>16</sup>

Government agencies also conduct one-off or continuous **national surveys** on a range of topics. Some examples include:

- Stats NZ conducts three integrated household surveys, including the biennial New Zealand General Social Survey, the annual Household Economic Survey, and the quarterly Household Labour Force Survey. It also recently announced the “Living in Aotearoa” survey, which will be conducted annually from 2022 to 2028, focusing on everyday living costs of households.
- Stats NZ also conducts Te Kupenga (the **Māori wellbeing** survey), postcensal survey of almost 8,500 adults (aged 15 years and over) of Māori ethnicity and/or descent, Te Kupenga gives an overall picture of the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of Māori people in Aotearoa.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.analytixlabs.co.in/blog/difference-between-data-and-information/>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.data.govt.nz/toolkit/intro-to-data/#whatsData>

<sup>16</sup> Included in the census count are all people on New Zealand soil on census night, as well as people on vessels in New Zealand waters; people on a passage between New Zealand ports; overseas residents in New Zealand; overseas visitors in New Zealand; people in diplomatic residences, including housekeeping staff, uniformed military personnel and members of diplomats’ families; and overseas military personnel and their families, including those on our territorial waters (Introduction to the New Zealand Census | Stats NZ).

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/te-kupenga-2018-final-english>



- The Ministry of Health has been conducting the New Zealand Health Survey annually since 2011. More recently, it conducted a COVID-19 Health and Wellbeing survey in 2020, which is currently being continued.
- The Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) has been conducting an annual National Survey of Employers since 2012, and it conducts a biennial New Zealand Consumer Survey.
- The Ministry of Social Development conducts the Youth and Wellbeing Strategy – What about me? The survey has been developed to collect data on up to 14,000 young people to inform policies, programmes and services. The survey is to be conducted every three years, and data collected will be used to measure progress on indicators under the Child Youth and Wellbeing Strategy.

**Administrative data** refers to data collected by government agencies or private organisations in the course of conducting their business or services, for operations such as delivering a ‘service’, or legal requirements to register events or as a record of transactions or events.”<sup>18</sup> Simply, it is data created when people interact with public services, such as schools, health services, courts, the social welfare system, police, and other services and collated by government.

Government agencies also generate data when they carry out research and evaluations of their services and programmes. Research and evaluations are either conducted in-house, or outsourced to Crown Research Institutes, universities, independent research organisations, and market research companies. Table 1 provides the various purposes for which data generated through these four sources are used.

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<sup>18</sup> Social Policy Evaluation and Research Unit/SUPERU, Enhancing your administrative data when evaluating programmes or services: Using Evidence for Impact, 3.





**Table 1: Use of census, survey, administrative and evaluation data in the government system**

Uses	Census	National Surveys	Administrative Data	Research and evaluation
Provides information on the size, composition, distribution, characteristics, as well as the economic, social and demographic circumstances of a country's population	✓			
Informs boundary delimitation and support political and administrative mapping, including electoral constituency boundaries and enumeration areas	✓			
Informs construction of sampling frames for other national, sub-national or sectoral surveys	✓			
Informs policymaking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Informs and influences the distribution of government funding and services in areas such as health, education, housing, social development and transport	✓	✓	✓	✓
Informs the calculation of social indicators	✓			
Informs research, analysis and appraisal to address social and economic issues	✓		✓	
Informs the design of strategies and programmes to implement policies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Informs the management and strengthening of government services and programmes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provides estimates of demand for consumer goods and services at national and subnational levels, as well as the size and characteristics of the labour force needed for the production and distribution of such commodities and services	✓	✓		



Uses	Census	National Surveys	Administrative Data	Research and evaluation
Demonstrates the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability (also transferability and scalability) of government services and programmes				✓
Informs government agencies' accountability to treasury and the public on their performance		✓	✓	✓
Used by civil society organisations and "ordinary citizens" to hold government accountable for delivering on its policies <sup>19,20</sup>	✓	✓	✓	✓

## The classification of Pacific Peoples in the census has changed overtime

To better understand some of the challenges that exist currently for Pacific peoples' data, it is important to explore the history of data collection. The history of the collecting official ethnic statistics in New Zealand is long and complex.

From the early 1900s, these statistics were collected to meet specific state objectives or purposes, usually in the interests of the majority group, rather than other groups with less access to power, resource, and voice. In the New Zealand context, official approaches to ethnic records were historically developed within the context of policies concerned with the assimilation, and later integration, of ethnic groups and with the monitoring and exclusion of those particular ethnic groups that were considered 'undesirable.'<sup>21</sup> These motives informed a period from the early 1900s to the 1970s where Pacific peoples and other minority groups such as Māori were classified based on a racial assessment of blood ties through questions on blood quantum.

In the 1970s, the idea of self-identified ethnicity also began to emerge,<sup>22</sup> however it took another two decades before people could self-identify.

19 Cf. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs Statistics Division, Principles and Recommendations for Population and Housing Censuses, Revision 3. United Nations: New York. ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/67/Rev.3

20 Cf. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Indicators: A guide to Measurement and Implementation. United Nations, HR/PUB/12/5.

21 Barber, K. (1999). 'Pakeha ethnicity and indigeneity.' Social Analysis: The International Journal of Anthropology, 43(2), 33-40.

22 Brown, P. G. (1983). An investigation of official ethnic statistics. Department of Statistics.



In more recent times, the official purposes of collecting ethnicity data have been to better understand the make-up of ethnic groups, to inform service development, and monitor social status and outcomes.

Some key changes were ushered in the 1996 Census which encouraged Pacific peoples to self-identify themselves not only as “Pacific” but also to include their ethnic-specific nations. The ethnicity question prompted respondents to “Tick as many circles as you need to show which ethnic group(s) you belong to.”<sup>23</sup>

There were also changes to the tick box response options. “New Zealand Māori” was moved up to become the first response option. The label “New Zealand European” was reworded to “New Zealand European or Pakeha.” A new “Other European” tick box was also included, with a separate list of six tick boxes (English, Dutch, Australian, Scottish, Irish, Other) added. Of note, the changes also introduced a prioritisation algorithm for those reporting multiple ethnic identities, which assigned Māori ethnicity precedence over Pacific, Asian, Other, and European ethnic groups.<sup>24</sup> Each ethnic group is coded within these datasets using Statistics New Zealand's 4-Level Hierarchical Classification System. In the 2006 Census, if we were to use Kiribati as an example:

- Level 1 (least detailed level) e.g. code ‘3’ stands for Pacific;
- Level 2 e.g. code ‘37’ is Other Pacific Peoples;
- Level 3 e.g. code ‘371’ is Other Pacific Peoples, and;
- Level 4 (most detailed level) e.g. code ‘37124’ is Kiribati.<sup>25</sup>

Within the Hierarchical Classification System, the Level 2 ethnic classification has 21 ethnic categories, Level 3 has 36 ethnic categories and Level 4 has 23 ethnic categories.

The shift to self-identification resulted in a significant increase in people reporting multiple ethnic identities, particularly for Māori and the ‘Other European’ groups. In the 2013 census, more than 11 percent of the general population identified with multiple ethnicities, and the levels of various ethnic identifications are even higher for children and young adults.<sup>26</sup>

Through this prioritisation, anyone who identified as both Pacific and Māori, was automatically only counted as Māori. This means that almost one fifth of Pacific New Zealanders who identified as both Pacific and Māori were only counted as Māori through the prioritised Level 1 classification.

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23 Taufa, Royal Commission of Enquiry into Abuse in Care, p12. 2021 <https://www.abuseincare.org.nz/assets/Uploads/Witness-Statement-of-Dr.-Seini-Taufa-for-Tulou-Our-Pacific-Voices-Tatala-e-Pulonga.pdf>

24 Taufa, S. (2015). A mother's hope: Pacific teenage pregnancy in New Zealand.

25 Ibid.

26 Statistics New Zealand (2014). 2013 Census QuickStats about culture and identity. <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summaryreports/quickstats-culture-identity.asp>



## The 2018 Census

In 2018, 381,642 people in New Zealand identified as Pacific, comprising 8.1 per cent of the total New Zealand population. This makes Pacific peoples the third-largest minority ethnic group in New Zealand, after Māori and Asian peoples.<sup>27</sup>

The 2018 census presented new challenges when it shifted to an electronic form of data collection instead of the paper forms. Stats NZ collected data in two ways.

- **Traditional method:** in previous censuses, a census response was defined as receipt of an individual form. No minimum amount of information was required for the form to be counted as a response.
- **New method:** for a response to be counted, it needs to have received two or more of the following information fields about an individual on census forms: name, date of birth, meshblock.<sup>28</sup> This information could come from an individual form, dwelling form, or household summary form.

Using the **traditional method**, the Pacific response rate was 65.1 percent compared to 83.3 percent of the national population. Within that 65.1 per cent, we do not have access to the demographic characteristics for those who did or did not complete the census.<sup>29</sup>

Under the **new method**, the Pacific response rate went up to 73.5 percent, which was still much lower than the 87.5 percent response rate for the national population Census due to the shift to the new method, the collection response rate for 2018 (73.5 percent) illustrated significantly lower response rate compared to 2006 (93.9 percent) and 2013 (90.8 percent).

The 2018 census highlighted the importance of modality when collecting data and the impacts that data collection methods have especially on Pacific communities. The 2018 census is further explored in chapter three.

## Integrated Data Infrastructure

For those who did not provide information about their ethnicity in the 2018 census form, 17 per cent of ethnicity information came from the 2013 census and 15 percent from administration data sources which included the Department of Internal Affairs (births), Ministry of Education (tertiary enrolments) and the Ministry of Health (primary health organisation enrollments). This data was obtained from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), an extensive government research database. The IDI gathers information from “government agencies, Stats NZ surveys, and non-government organisations (NGOs).”<sup>30</sup> While there are benefits to using IDI, there are limitations, especially for minority groups.

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<sup>27</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-zealands-population-reflects-growing-diversity>

<sup>28</sup> Meshblock is a measurement of geographical area used for statistical purposes.

<sup>29</sup> Stats NZ (2019). 2018 Census: Interim coverage rates, collection response rates, and data sources. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/reports/2018-census-interim-coverage-rates-collection-response-rates-and-data-sources#collection>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/integrated-data-infrastructure/your-information-in-the-idi/>



**Table 2: Pros and cons of the IDI data**

Pros	Cons
IDI data contains population-level data, which means that all people who engage with the government system in some capacity are included in the database	Inconsistencies in how ethnicity data is collected across Government and the context by which data is collected. i.e. is the individual self-reporting or is their ethnicity recorded by someone else.
	Much of the ethnicity data in the IDI is not time-stamped (e.g., health data), unless it was collected on a particular date like a national census.
	Those who identify with multiple ethnicities may be recorded as one ethnicity in one dataset and as another ethnicity in another.
	The small sample size of the Pacific population often means that Pacific peoples are suppressed in the data.

A 2016 report by Reid et al notes that the quality of multiple ethnicity responses between administrative datasets and the 2013 census reveals the poor performance of many of these datasets (including health and ACC) in identifying someone with more than one ethnicity compared to the census.<sup>31</sup> This is problematic considering that 40.6 percent of Pacific people identify with two or more ethnic groups.

It is clear that census data has limitations which result from the methods of collecting data. These limitations have been most prominent in the 2018 census count where there have been gaps due to the way data was collected. To address some of these data gaps, government has used the IDI, however even that data has significant limitations. These contribute to the issues with Pacific data and Pacific data inequities.

## Ethnicity data in national surveys, administrative data and government research

At a data system level across government, there are issues with collecting ethnic specific data. Table 2 describes how data has been routinely collected across sectors to highlight inconsistencies in how Pacific data has and continues to be collected, leading to inequities, based on the lack of quality evidence-based insights to inform decision-making.

31 Reid, G., Bycroft, C., & Gleisner, F. (2016). Comparison of ethnicity information in administrative data and the census. <http://archive.stats.govt.nz/methods/researchpapers/topss/comp-ethnic-admin-data-census.asp>



**Table 3: Cross-sector data collection**

Government Data		
<p><b>Ethnicity data in statistics</b></p>	<p>Pre 1995, the question on birth and death registration forms asked about the “degree of Māori blood” and “Pacific Island blood” of the parents (mother and father).</p> <p>Following the Births, Deaths, Marriages, and Relationships Registrations Act 1995, there was a shift to collecting ethnicity (as opposed to descent) data for all births and deaths and aligning with the 1996 census ethnicity question which allowed for multiple ethnicities to be recorded.</p>	<p>Using the post 1995 ethnic classifications, there was an increase in the number of Māori deaths recorded and the number of Māori births, which doubled between 1994 and 1996.<sup>32</sup></p> <p>The contributing factor to the high increase was the lack of data being collected about Māori and Pacific pre-1996.</p> <p>This highlights that Māori and Pacific were under-represented before 1996.</p>
<p><b>Health and disability sector</b></p>	<p>In the health and disability sector, ethnicity data is most commonly collected when someone uses a health service/provider.<sup>33</sup></p> <p>While there have been significant improvements in approaches to ethnicity data collection in the health and disability sector, concerns about ethnicity data quality remain.</p>	<p>Pre-2005, ethnicity was collected mainly at the Level 1 (Prioritised ethnic classification) (where all 17+ ethnic groups associated with a Pacific country fell under one ethnic umbrella term ‘Pacific’). Consequently, a Pacific person who also identifies as Māori will only be counted as Māori.</p> <p>Post-2005, the health and disability sector was encouraged to record ethnicity at Level 2, allowing for ethnic-specific comparisons. At level 2, the only Pacific ethnic groups acknowledged include: Samoan, Cook Island Māori, Tongan, Niue, Tokelauan, Fijian. The other groups would fall into Other Pacific or Pacific Not Further Defined.</p>

32 Cormack, D. (2010). The practice and politics of counting: Ethnicity data in official statistics in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Te Rōpū Rangahau Hauora a Eru Pōmare.

33 Bramley, D. & Latimer, S. (2007). ‘The accuracy of ethnicity data in primary care.’ The New Zealand Medical Journal, 120(1262).



Government Data		
<p><b>Ethnicity data in education sector</b></p>	<p>The Ministry of Education has routinely collected data on early childhood, primary and secondary student ethnicity. However, it has only been since 2007 that the Ministry of Education has required that codes based on Statistic New Zealand's Level 3 ethnicity classification which has 36 ethnicities to identify ethnic group data.</p>	<p>There is a likely variation within early childhood centres, primary and secondary schools, and tertiary institutions regarding the specific questions and methods used to collect ethnicity data that will impact the interpretation of data.</p> <p>Those who are only identified using Level 4 classification are categorised as 'Pacific other,' e.g. Tuvalu or Kiribati are not counted at Level 3.</p>
<p><b>Ethnicity data in the social welfare sector</b></p>	<p>The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) has responsibility for activities across the social welfare sector, including child and youth protection, youth justice services, adoption services, administration and delivery of superannuation, employment, income support, and student support - allowances and loans. However, because ethnicity is not related to entitlement or eligibility for assistance, it is not a compulsory field.</p>	<p>Difficult to access data on Pacific people and/or families that have gone through state care because ethnicity is not a compulsory field.</p> <p>Ethnicity data has only been collected from 1991.</p> <p>Across MSD, there is not a single system that holds information about Work and Income services users, including ethnicity.</p> <p>There are variations in the ethnicity questions on forms, e.g. To which ethnic group do you believe you belong?</p>
<p><b>Ethnicity data in the criminal justice sector</b></p>	<p>There are large gaps in the completeness of ethnicity data and the lack of a standardised approach.</p> <p>Since 2005, ethnicity for apprehension statistics has been collected using the following categories:</p> <p>'Asian', 'European', 'Indian', 'Latin American/Hispanic', 'Māori', 'Middle Eastern', 'Native African (or cultural group of African origin)', 'Other (specify)', 'Pacific Island', and 'Unknown'.</p>	<p>Ethnicity data collection has yet to become routine practice across the whole sector.</p> <p>The data that is currently available is collected primarily through the Police, the Department of Courts, and the Department of Corrections.</p> <p>Data is not collected beyond the Level 1 and, in some cases Level 2 ethnicity classification.</p>



We rely on data to understand what is happening in our Pacific families and communities and what we need to inform policy and interventions for Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand. However, there are some significant issues with data collection practices across government that are impacting on making improvements to wellbeing outcomes for Pacific communities.

The next chapter examines in detail some of the current issues with data collection practices that are impacting Pacific communities across key stages of the data cycle.







# Chapter 3: Talanoa 'a Kāinga – Insights about Pacific Data Equity

## What is Pacific data?

Pacific data, within the context of government encompasses a variety of different aspects, which include: information about Pacific peoples that is categorised/classified and counted, the indicators and measures used to define and quantify Pacific peoples lived experiences and their perceptions of wellbeing, the methods and tools used for data collection, the interpretation and use of Pacific data for policy and decision-making. Our briefing explores predominantly the forms of Pacific data collected through the national census, government surveys, administrative data and government research.

It is important to acknowledge the differing interpretations for Pacific data between government and from a Pacific perspective. For the latter, data represents an extension of tagata (a person), aiga (family) or community, the past and the present. There is a clear distinction between data for Pacific, data about Pacific, and data with Pacific. One such view is from the Pacific Data Sovereignty Network who view Pacific data as:<sup>34</sup>

- A living taonga that reflects and derives from Pacific peoples' history, present realities and future aspirations.
- Data can only be categorically 'Pacific' if collated, analysed, accessed, managed, and shared by Pacific peoples through a Pacific lens.
- Pacific data refers to data produced by Pacific or that is about Pacific and the environments Pacific peoples have relationships to. However, there is explicit recognition that not all data about Pacific peoples is not by or for Pacific, such as government information collated by government agencies, but is still relevant.
- Pacific data includes digital spaces and platforms that are about Pacific peoples and resources, and the knowledge and information that influences Pacific lives at both a micro and macro-level.

There are clear differences in the scope of Pacific data, how it is interpreted, and the expectations around how it is collated, managed, accessed, and shared. Understanding how some of these differences can be bridged will be an important consideration in understanding the role government can play in realising Pacific data equity going forward.

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<sup>34</sup> <https://moanaconnect.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PDS-consultation-document.pdf>



## What is Pacific data equity?

The term 'data equity' refers to the consideration of data through an equity lens in relation to how it is collected, analysed, interpreted, and distributed. A critical component to data equity is the acknowledgement that data is not objective but is subject to subjective experiences and potential biases. Data equity acknowledges that the goals or motivations that inform the generation and treatment of data are informed by the perspectives of an individual or institution and can lead to the marginalisation of communities, unequal opportunities to access data and the potential for harm due to data misuse.

Therefore, Pacific data equity is about ensuring that the definition of Pacific data and its design, collection, analysis, interpretation, use, the production and presentation of information and narratives about Pacific peoples, is free from unfairness or bias.

## Understanding the current barriers to Pacific data equity using the Kakala framework

*“For too long, we have allowed others to write our stories, sing our songs, name our world and define who we are, and we have allowed others to validate, authenticate and legitimise who we are. We must take ownership of who we are, what we are, and what we call our own. Our data, our Pacific heritage(s), our new creations” (Dr Ana Taufe’ulungaki)<sup>35</sup>”*

Data inequities are experienced by Pacific peoples across the data system. Maggie Walter<sup>36</sup> describes the inequities found in data when it does not prioritise the needs of indigenous/minority groups using the BADDR acronym (Table 5).

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<sup>35</sup> Pacific Data Sovereignty Network, The 2019 Moana Research seminar series report: Pacific data sovereignty: Day 2 29 November 2019. Life South Manukau p27.

<sup>36</sup> Walter, M., 2018. The voice of Indigenous data: Beyond the markers of disadvantage. Griffith Review, (60), pp.256-263.



**Table 4: BADDR Outcome versus Indigenous Data needs**

<b>Dominant BADDR (administrative) data</b>	<b>Indigenous Data Needs</b>
<b>Blaming Data</b>	<b>Lifeworld Data</b>
Too much data contrasts indigenous/non-indigenous data, comparing indigenous peoples against mainstream norms and standards.	We need data to inform a comprehensive, nuanced narrative of who we are as peoples of our culture, our communities, our resilience, our goals and our successes.
<b>Aggregate Data</b>	<b>Disaggregate Data</b>
Too much data are aggregated at the national and/or state level implying indigenous cultural and geographical homogeneity.	We need data that recognises our cultural and geographical diversity to provide evidence for community-level planning and service delivery.
<b>Decontextualised Data</b>	<b>Contextualised Data</b>
Too much data are simplistic and decontextualised, focussing on individuals and families outside of their social/cultural context.	We need data inclusive of the wider social structural context/complexities in which indigenous disadvantage occurs.
<b>Deficit, Government Priority Data</b>	<b>Indigenous Priority Data</b>
Too much data reprise deficit-linked concepts that service the priorities of Government.	We need data that measures beyond problems and addresses our priorities and agenda.
<b>Restricted Access Data</b>	<b>Available Amenable Data</b>
Too much data is barricaded away from official statistical agencies and institutions.	We need data that are both accessible and amenable to our requirements.



In this section we explore the six key stages of the data cycle<sup>37</sup> and overlay this with the kakala framework to understand where inequities for Pacific data exist within the Aotearoa New Zealand Government system. Kakala refers to the practice of weaving together a garland using flowers and leaves. The Kakala framework is a research framework that scholars have continued to build and strengthen since its introduction in the early 1990s by Professor Konai Helu-Thaman. The six-phase Kakala process referred to by Johansson Fua<sup>38</sup> was used for this project.

The application of the Kakala framework for this briefing is used to demonstrate the challenges but also opportunities when applying a cultural lens to identify areas that need strengthening in the current data system. The inequities are highlighted under the Kakala phases of teu, toli, tui, luva, mālie and māfana. As we outline the key stages of data collection and survey cycle in general and how these relate to the Kakala phases, we will include some key insights from our talanoa ‘a kāinga process.

## Talanoa ‘a kāinga – perspectives and experiences of Pacific data inequities

The Tongan practice ‘Fofola e falá kae talanoa e kāingá’ means laying out the mat (fala) for the families (kāinga) to talk (talanoa) with purpose. This was done to give voice to the kāinga, generate mutual understanding, and resolve conflict.

To inform our understanding of Pacific data equity, we engaged in a talanoa ‘a kainga process with 124 participants across MPP and 15 government agencies about what Pacific data they use, how they used it, and ways in which this data can be improved. The insights we received through the talanoa a kāinga process are woven through the discussion set out below.



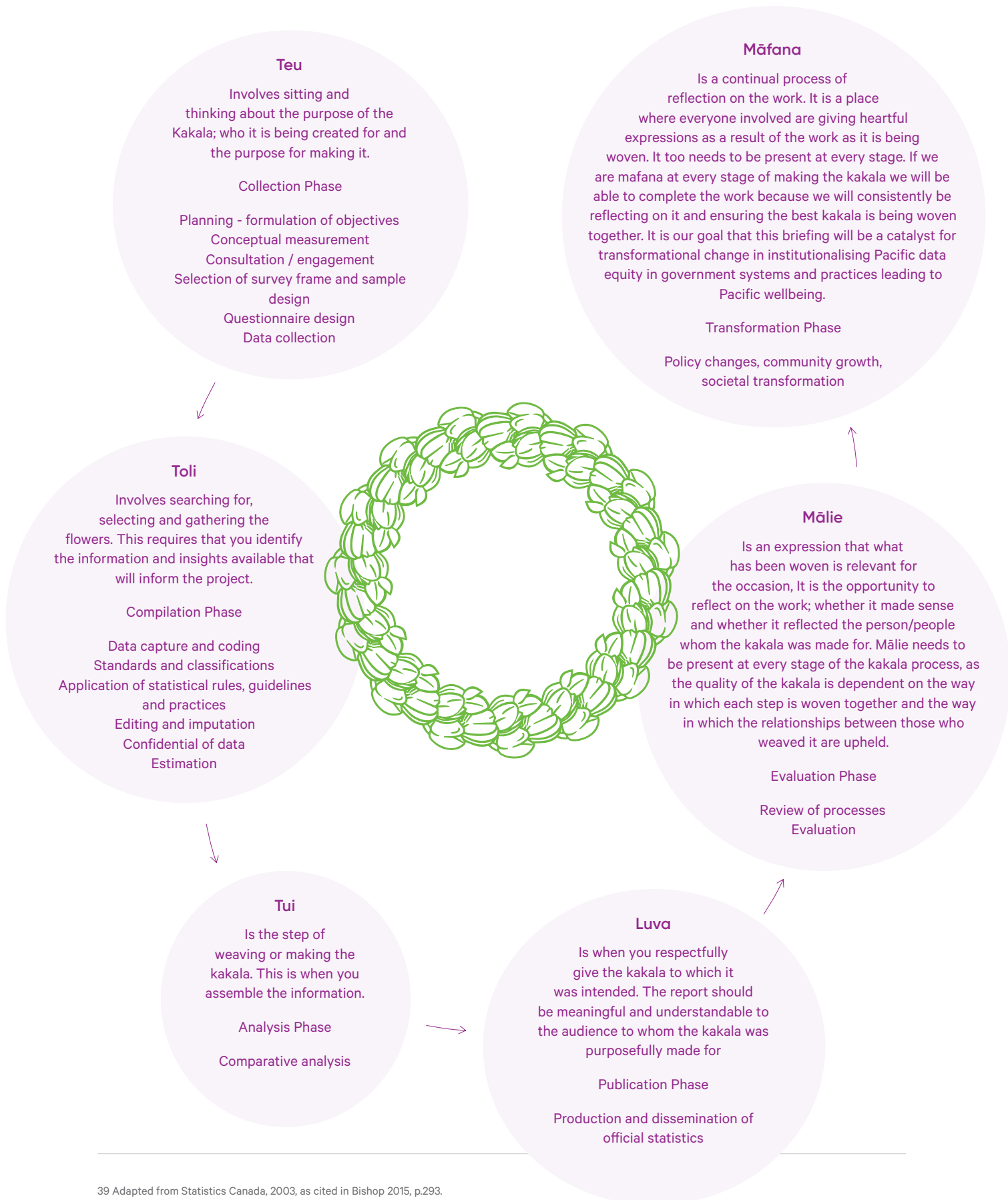
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<sup>37</sup> As outlined in Bishop, 2015, p 293

<sup>38</sup> Johansson Fua, Kakala Research Framework: A Garland in Celebration of a Decade of Rethinking Education, (2014): 53-55.



Steps of the Kakala Framework  
Corresponding stages of the data cycle, and decision making points<sup>39</sup>



39 Adapted from Statistics Canada, 2003, as cited in Bishop 2015, p.293.



### Teu: Inequity in data design

The Teu is the first step of the making of a Kakala. It is also the first step of the Kakala research framework process. It encompasses the thinking, identifying information to be gathered, the planning and design of the next steps to follow. It also determines who is best to carry out the subsequent steps of toli, tui and luva.

One of the common themes from the Talanoa a kāinga was that there is a need for data that captures Pacific peoples using concepts and methods that align with Pacific values and culture. As the worldview and priorities that inform the data process are not informed by Pacific norms, this leads to missing data as the definitions do not capture the lived realities. As one talanoa ‘a kāinga participant states:



*“So, if you really want to measure equity, I think it involves a bigger breakdown, a more detailed breakdown by subgroups, including generation, including first language spoken at home and country of origin”*

Participants also overwhelmingly highlighted the importance of the role that Pacific peoples could play in the design process to shift the perception of data as being done to them, to data done by them:



*“I think that the targets, or goals, or outcomes, that the government stipulates for all agencies, that Pacific people have had the opportunity to participate in the design of those. I think that there would be a sense that Pacific communities are enabled by data, rather than restricted by number and reports”*

We heard that not all agencies we engaged with in the talanoa ‘a kāinga consider a Pacific world view in their data collection, analysis or dissemination as the priority was serving the general population. Though there was some acknowledgement that if specific consideration of Pacific communities were to occur, this would be useful to support Pacific outcomes. The following table identifies that inequities lie in the absence of consideration of Pacific worldviews in the design of Pacific data production.

<b>What is the issue?</b>	The worldview sitting behind data impacts the way data is designed, collected, analysed, presented, and used in policymaking. The way data is designed reflects what matters to those who design it.
<b>Why is this an issue?</b>	Data in New Zealand is designed to measure populations against mainstream markers of success. Mainstream markers of success reflect ideals such as individualism and capitalism.
<b>What does it mean for Pacific peoples?</b>	Pacific peoples’ values and markers of success are not taken into consideration. Instead, Pacific peoples’ success is measured against Euro-centric ideals, which do not reflect Pacific values or markers of success.



**How do current practices perpetuate inequities for Pacific?**

This lack of consideration of Pacific values and measures of success perpetuates a largely quantitative, deficit-focus against measures and indicators that do not meaningfully reflect the wellbeing aspirations of Pacific peoples.

Indicators used to measure Pacific wellbeing are not useful on their own because current data on Pacific peoples dissects the person. Instead, Pacific wellbeing indicators need to reflect the tagata (the whole person in relation to the various context and relationships through which it finds meaning) through both tangible (quantitative) and intangible (qualitative) measures.

By perpetuating negative stereotypes, it affects the way in which other people perceive Pacific peoples, but also how Pacific peoples perceive themselves, which has a negative impact on their wellbeing.

By remaining “peripheral to the channels of power through which consequential decisions about [Pacific] statistics are made...[communities] rely on data that largely fails to reflect community needs, priorities, and self-conceptions. This data imbalance threatens self-determination, limits informed policy decisions, and restrict progress toward (Pacific) aspirations for healthy, sustainable communities<sup>40</sup>.”

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40 Kukutai, T., & Taylor, J. (2016). Indigenous data sovereignty: Toward an agenda. ANU press.. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341255746\\_Indigenous\\_data\\_sovereignty](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341255746_Indigenous_data_sovereignty)



## PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN DATA DESIGN

### A CASE STUDY: PACIFIC VOLUNTEERING AND UNPAID WORK

Stats NZ Census 2006, 2013, 2018 questions on volunteering assume all New Zealanders hold the same concepts around volunteering.

The terms ‘unpaid work’ and ‘volunteering’ are non-Pacific concepts, which do not reflect nature of reciprocal relationships, cultural obligations, and Pacific values underpinning Pacific contributions and participation in these activities.

The lack of consideration of culturally-specific values relevant to the topic meant that far fewer Pacific peoples completed that question in the Census compared to other populations (only 65 percent of Pacific people responded to this question in the 2018 Census, compared to 80 percent of non-Pacific people) – and for those Pacific who did answer the question, research has shown they did not feel their contributions were accurately reflected in the Census data.

To address this inequity, In 2021, MPP conducted research on unpaid work and volunteering by Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, based on a Pacific-centric perspective of what constitutes unpaid work and volunteering, and using a culturally appropriate methodology underpinned by Pacific values.<sup>41</sup> The research found that Pacific peoples carry out 66,035 hours of unpaid work and volunteering per week, which equates to an average of 33 hours per person per week (see graphs showing average hours of unpaid and voluntary work). Collectively, they gifted more than \$2.4 million to others during a four-month reference period. This equated to a total of \$138,045 given to others on average per week, or \$161 per week per person.

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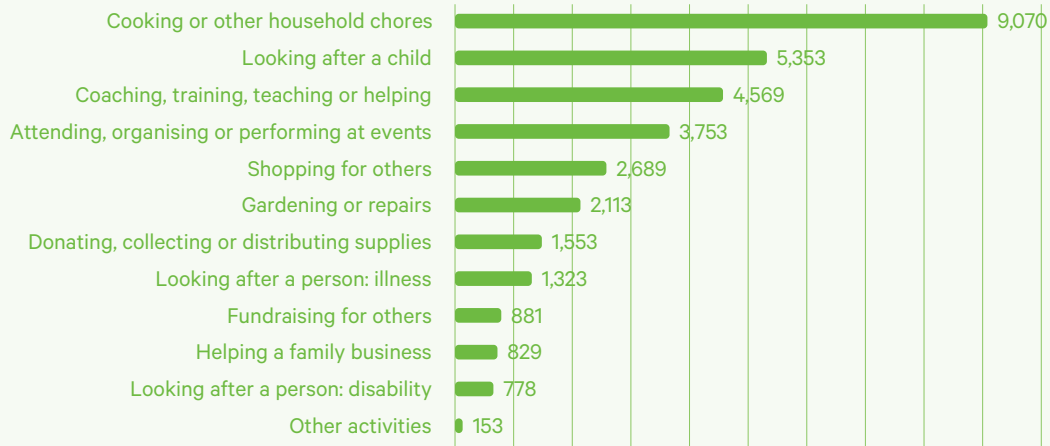
<sup>41</sup> Ministry for Pacific Peoples, "Pacific Economy research report on unpaid work and volunteering in Aotearoa, 2021. <https://www.mpp.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Pacific-Economy-Research-Report-on-Unpaid-Work-and-Volunteering-in-Aotearoa.pdf>





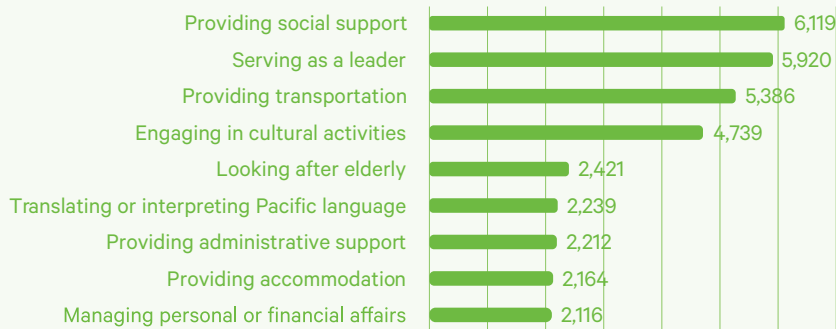
### Total hours spent over one week (statistically measured):

33,064



### Total hours spent over one week (not measured):

33,317



In addition, volunteering and unpaid work were found to have substantial intangible wellbeing benefits for Pacific peoples, for example it enables the sharing of cultural knowledge, increases social capital, contributes to the wellbeing of their communities, and provides spiritual grounding.

The valuing and celebration of unpaid Pacific work and volunteering is also recognised as an important outcome within 'Contribution of Pacific to Aotearoa valued' under Goal 2 – Prosperous Pacific Communities of MPP's Pacific Wellbeing Outcome Framework.



## PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN DATA DESIGN

### A CASE STUDY: POPULATION UNDERCOUNT IN HEALTH SECTOR

Data informs various decision-making across sectors. In the Health sector, population-based funding determines the share of funding to be allocated to DHBs based on populations rather than health care usage. In the Counties Manukau area, there are longstanding issues with an undercount of their population estimates. In 2019, the Counties Manukau Health Service User population data had an undercount of approximately 12,000 people. It is estimated that this undercount would have amounted to \$31.5m in underfunding for the Counties Manukau area.<sup>42</sup>

Pacific communities are disproportionately impacted by this undercount as they make up a significant number of the population residing in Counties Manukau.

### Toli: Inequity in government data collection methods

The toli phase is about gathering the flowers to make the Kakala. In research, the toli phase involves the collecting of the data. If the previous teu step has considered who is best to collect the data, the best sources of this data, how best to collect the data then it will naturally lead to the collection of the best data to inform decisions to support Pacific wellbeing.

The importance of using both qualitative and quantitative data to report against outcomes was commonly raised in talanoa 'a kāinga as both are needed to build the narrative of Pacific peoples. Talanoa 'a kāinga participants commonly identified that the prominence of quantitative methodologies limits the potential to capture data which is relevant to Pacific peoples lived realities.

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<sup>42</sup> Dr Gary Jackson and Dr Wing Cheuk Chan, "Population count issues affecting equitable health funding allocations" December 2020.



For Pacific communities, the prominent method of collecting information tends to be that of talanoa, resulting in rich qualitative narratives. The importance of using both qualitative and quantitative data to report against outcomes was commonly raised in talanoa 'a kāinga as both are needed to build the narrative of Pacific peoples. One participant articulated this issue as: captured in the following quote:

*"We seem to undervalue qualitative data. I know we need quantitative data, I know it's a government thing, I know we need to measure something and count something. But we undervalue in terms of the richness of – especially from the [Pacific] communities – the value of qualitative data"*

The collection or use of higher level ethnic classification does not provide much detail which is used commonly as one way to describe the Pacific population across agencies. It perpetuates the homogenisation of Pacific peoples, and limits the analysis of more meaningful disaggregated Pacific data at the tui (analysis) stage of the data cycle.

Collecting the diverse views of Pacific peoples requires consideration of not only ethnic make-up, but geographical, as one participant comments:

*"[It's] making sure that whenever we talk about Pacific people that we're not relying on the experience of urban Pacific people predominantly in South Auckland because that's a huge population, no doubt about it. I think probably a lot of our insights come from that part of the country, and in that context, I wonder, 'but what about the Cook Island population in Tokoroa for instance?'"*

Sampling is an important consideration in the toli phase. One agency noted that the sampling frame of Pacific peoples was a challenge and there is need to look at various frameworks to support getting the sampling right. Other sampling issues we heard about are that government data sets are in need of larger Pacific sample size because they are often small. To highlight the overall issue one participant noted:

*"I'm also aware that... diversity within Pacific populations is really important and recognizing it's not just... these high-level kind of groupings... because we have small sample sizes... it's not going to be representative of all Pacific peoples because it's their diversity"*



<b>What is the issue?</b>	The methods used to collect Pacific data directly influence the way data is analysed, interpreted, and used in policy.
<b>Why is this an issue?</b>	There is a lack of Pacific involvement in data collection, fieldworkers not familiar with Pacific community customs and cultures, barriers such as linguistic and digital divides, and a lack of trust in the government system due to historical trauma. All of these impact on the inclusion and participation of Pacific voices in data.
<b>What does it mean for Pacific peoples?</b>	Pacific peoples have lower participation rates in censuses and national surveys, which means their voices are not heard. Undercounted Pacific voices leads to inaccurate sampling frame designs and reliance on linking administrative data of variable quality.
<b>How do current practices perpetuate inequities for Pacific peoples?</b>	The reliance on non-Pacific driven data collection methods, and the devaluing of Pacific-focused data methodologies leads to inequitable data collection of Pacific data. Pacific data reported is only as good as the data collected.





## PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN DATA COLLECTION AN EXAMPLE: CENSUS 2018 UNDERCOUNT

The Census 2018 data collection process failed to address how existing Pacific inequities around the digital divide<sup>43</sup> would impact on census returns from Pacific people and to engage meaningfully with Pacific communities to reduce hesitation and increase trust in government data collection. As a result, there was a 4.9 percent undercount for Pacific peoples translating to around 19,600 people.<sup>44</sup>

As the census is used to design all policy-driven surveys for Stats NZ and MoH, current surveys rely on outdated (2013 Census) sampling frames to produce nationally representative statistics. Stats NZ cannot confirm current methods for Pacific data collection are representative:

*"It is very important that users of the 2018 Census data keep in mind that the general assessments of quality that have been produced by Stats NZ are designed to provide an overall indication of how well the data for specific variables have been counted...These measures are calculated at the national level and the resultant ratings are not necessarily useful guides to quality when data are being examined for small areas or small population sub-groups."<sup>45</sup>*

<sup>43</sup> Department of Internal Affairs, "Community access to digital technologies: a literature review, p. 28 Accessed August, 11, 2022. [https://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/Digital-divide-Literature-Review.pdf/\\$file/Digital-divide-Literature-Review.pdf](https://www.dia.govt.nz/pubforms.nsf/URL/Digital-divide-Literature-Review.pdf/$file/Digital-divide-Literature-Review.pdf)

<sup>44</sup> Stats NZ, "Post-enumeration survey: 2018", <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/post-enumeration-survey-2018/>.

<sup>45</sup> Stats NZ, Final report of the 2018 Census External Data Quality Panel, 2020: 8.



*“We have no evidence about whether any types of household are more likely to be missed than others, so cannot comment on how representative households with Māori and Pacific residents that responded to the census are, compared to those that did not respond.”<sup>46</sup>*

The use of administrative data to improve response rates for Census 2018 is problematic. At the time of the decision to rely on linking IDI administrative data to Census 2018:

- Ethnicity data collection varied widely by government agency, and
- Administrative data was collected at varying aggregated ethnicity levels.

Ethnicity data was not a requirement for IDI linking of administrative data, so little quality control was applied by agencies or Stats NZ. This led the 2018 Census External Data Quality Panel to conclude:

*“These results indicate that households with Māori or Pacific residents are under-represented in the census household data and that the census data from responding households may be biased in particular ways.”<sup>47</sup>*

Only around 70 percent response rate for Pacific peoples, with the rest of Pacific data being derived from administrative and imputed methods. One consequence of this was that over 54,000 Pacific peoples could not be placed in households.

*“In the case of ethnicity, improved coverage does not necessarily equate to improved quality of data...In the 2018 Census, 29 percent or more of the ethnicity data for Māori and Pacific ethnic populations come from other sources. The Māori and Pacific data is not of the same quality as the data for the NZ European ethnic population”<sup>48</sup>*

### **Tui: Inequity in data analysis**

The tui phase is about creating the kakala. In the research context, it involves bringing together what has been collected, applying culturally nuanced methods and lens to tell the story of Pacific peoples.

Many talanoa participants recognised that often Pacific data is not analysed using a Pacific lens (e.g. using Pacific frameworks such as Kakala). Similar to comments made regarding the toli phase (data collection) of the data cycle, many confirmed that to tell the Pacific stories we need to look at quantitative as well as qualitative data.

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<sup>46</sup> Stats NZ, Families and households in the 2018 Census: Data sources, family coding, and data quality. Retrieved from [www.stats.govt.nz](http://www.stats.govt.nz), 2021: 25

<sup>47</sup> Stats NZ, “Families and households in the 2018 Census: Data sources, family coding, and data quality,” 2021: 25

<sup>48</sup> Stats NZ, Final report of the 2018 Census External Data Quality Panel, 2020: 49.



Currently, cultural views are not accommodated for at the design phase and as a consequence are not captured at the analysis phase. As one participant commented:



*“But what we don’t have is that we don’t have a kind of a Pacific lens in terms of interpreting that data and what that means. So for example, if you’re looking at different data performances at different regions, if you’re looking at South Auckland for example, there’s a reason why this measure is different to if it’s in Ōtautahi for example, because you’ve got different learner cohorts”*

Participants commonly raised that data currently portrays a deficit story portrayed through the data. By not applying a cultural lens there is no understanding of Pacific complexities. For Pacific data nuances are important at the analysis phase rather than to “codify it into data” because there is a need to explore the data in context.

Another common theme that was raised by at least five agencies and could apply at all stages of the kakala process is the critical need for workforce development. It was noted that there are not enough Pacific statisticians or researchers to provide a cultural lens over the data. Pacific staff within agencies are having to provide cultural services and support that are over and above their roles without proper remuneration or recognition.

<p><b>What is the issue?</b></p>	<p>The methods used to analyse Pacific data directly impact whose voices are represented and how they are best reflected in policy decisions.</p>
<p><b>Why is this an issue?</b></p>	<p>Pacific peoples is an umbrella term representing 17 diverse cultures in NZ government data. Conventional data analysis is designed around large-scale, homogenous data.</p>
<p><b>What does it mean for Pacific peoples?</b></p>	<p>Pacific data is analysed inconsistently across government, which means the ways in which Pacific concerns and aspirations are presented do not always reflect lived realities for diverse Pacific communities and Pacific values as a whole.</p>
<p><b>How do current practices perpetuate inequities for Pacific peoples?</b></p>	<p>Currently, there is no way to consistently utilise Pacific data to understand concerns and aspirations at the community level, which is the level most policy decisions, funding, and services are geared to address. This discrepancy means that policy decisions are made assuming all Pacific needs are the same, regardless of ethnic, cultural, religious, regional, or socioeconomic diversity.</p>



## PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN DATA ANALYSIS

### AN EXAMPLE: HEALTH SYSTEM

In a 2019 Health System Review Pacific Report<sup>49</sup> the following Pacific data inequities were identified:

- Current government practices allow for three forms of ethnicity data analysis: prioritised (i.e., Māori, Pacific, Asian, Other), total (i.e., overlapping groups), and single/combination data (i.e., Māori vs Pacific-Māori vs Pacific vs nMnP)
- Government agencies vary in their standard analysis recommendations (e.g., MoH recommends prioritised data as the standard, while Stats NZ recommends total data as the standard)
- Equity measures based on Te Tiriti alone, such as prioritised ethnicity (Māori, Pacific, Asian, Other) and Māori vs non-Māori do not accurately capture Pacific data.
- Prioritised data leads to undercounting of Pacific voices in official NZ statistics, which perpetuates Pacific inequities across measures of wellbeing.

## PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN DATA ANALYSIS

### AN EXAMPLE: SMALL SAMPLE SIZE

Pacific data tends to have very large confidence intervals due to high levels of variability of the data. In a mainstream perspective, data with large confidence intervals reduce the ability to assign statistical significance.

As Pacific is an umbrella term, it is reasonable to assume high variability is related to:

- the small sample size of Pacific compared to the rest of the population, and
- the collapse of many diverse Pacific communities (with potentially very different responses) into a single Pacific category.

Pacific data tends to have small sample sizes and high confidence intervals, meaning Pacific data is often suppressed and therefore not incorporated into policymaking decisions for Pacific communities.

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<sup>49</sup> Pacific Perspectives, Health System Review, 2019. <https://systemreview.health.govt.nz/assets/HDSR-interim-report/091ee22213/Pacific-Persepectives-Health-System-Review-Final-PDF-Version.pdf>





### Luva: Inequity in data access

The luva phase is about gifting the completed kakala. This is the handing over of the kakala with sincerity, humility and honour to the wearer, acknowledging the hard work and sacrifice taken to create the garland. In a research context, the luva stage honours those who have given their voice and knowledge to help the research. Another common theme from talanoa 'a kāinga was accessibility issues to Pacific data existing for communities, and within government itself.

For Pacific communities, the feedback loop between agencies or data groups and communities where data was collected from was often absent or insufficient. In addition, when outputs were produced by agencies, they tended to take the form of charts or contained within long reports which did not enable easy access to data findings.

Another common issue raised was also the lack of access of Pacific communities to their data. This was seen, for some, due to a lack of consideration to give back to the communities as part of the data system approach as captured in the following quote:

*“We don’t actually build in the mechanisms properly to be able to get back to the communities and the respondents properly. So that we can share back with the information that we’ve collected and the insights. Or even involve them in the interpretation of insight”*

Further to this, access to data more broadly has been an issue for Pacific communities which has affected their trust and confidence in the data process.

*“[To be able to] access data at your fingertips would be good and having confidence in the data and not having to double check it and cross reference it with other data. It’s useful for everyone – the whole community. Seeing communities having more ownership of their own data would be great”*

*“So when we are looking for information to help find solutions to community issues those communities need to have access to the information so that they can help solve them. We need to have access and whoever has the data should be well-known, should be on their website”*

However, it is important to note that agencies were willing to make changes to their data system practices to support Pacific data equity.

Talanoa 'a kāinga participants also noted that sharing of data between agencies is inconsistent and ad hoc. This in turn impacted agencies' abilities to draw robust insights about Pacific peoples to inform policy and decision making.

There are significant issues with the access to Pacific data. A related issue has been the sharing of Pacific data within communities and the rise of misinformation. This was particularly prominent during COVID-19 and the types of information that had been widely shared among Pacific communities.



<b>What is the issue?</b>	The ways Pacific data is shared, distributed, and used in policies and communities.
<b>Why is this an issue?</b>	Pacific data is collected in conventional ways in New Zealand, such as a lack of Pacific involvement in data collection, fieldworkers not familiar with Pacific community customs and cultures, barriers such as linguistic and digital divides, and a lack of trust in the government system due to historical trauma. All of these impact the participation of Pacific voices in data.
<b>What does it mean for Pacific peoples?</b>	Pacific peoples have lower participation rates in the census and Tier 1 surveys, which means their voices are not heard. Undercounted Pacific voices leads to inaccurate sampling frame designs and reliance on linking administrative data of variable quality.
<b>How do current practices perpetuate inequities for Pacific peoples?</b>	<p>The reliance on non-Pacific driven data collection methods, and the devaluing of Pacific-focused data methodologies leads to inequitable data collection of Pacific data. Pacific data reported is only as good as the data collected.</p> <p>Pacific data will only contribute to improved Pacific wellbeing if it reflects the diverse lived experiences of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa.</p>





## **PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN PRODUCTION**

### **AN EXAMPLE: LACK OF PACIFIC-DESIGNED DATA STANDARDS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR**

The public sector currently does not have Pacific-designed data standards. People using Pacific data have no way of easily identifying which sources were designed by Pacific for Pacific, which sources were designed through a Pacific framework, or which sources were Pacific community-driven or included. With no set standards for Pacific data, government researchers and evaluators prepare data without regard to the quality of the data. This results in policy makers failing to provide policy recommendations based on high quality evidence, which further perpetuates a cycle of poor outcomes for Pacific peoples (missing key populations entirely by not providing targeted recommendations will have future impact for key populations in Aotearoa New Zealand).

## **PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN SHARING OF DATA**

### **AN EXAMPLE: MISINFORMATION DURING COVID-19 AMONGST PACIFIC COMMUNITIES**

During the height of COVID-19, the rapid rise of misinformation was particularly prominent amongst Pacific communities. There was widespread sharing of information from unofficial and unverified sources about COVID-19. Some contributing factors to the rise of misinformation includes the lack of digital literacy, issues with the digital divide and also a lack of easy access to official information that was accessible and translated in Pacific languages.

## **PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN PRODUCTION**

### **AN EXAMPLE: A NEED TO CONSIDER APPROPRIATE DATA OUTPUT METHODS AND ACCESS**

Once a kakala has been gathered, prepared, and woven with care, it must be gifted to the appropriate recipient with love and respect. The Kakala is designed specifically for a particular person, taking into consideration all aspects of that person – reflecting themselves, their social standing, their family, their contributions, and lived realities.

Pacific data reflects the voices of Pacific communities, and their stories need to be gifted appropriately. The gifting of Pacific data cannot solely focus on producing government reports but must be gifted back to Pacific communities. This should be done in culturally appropriate ways, through culturally appropriate channels, following culturally appropriate protocols. In order to do this, Pacific data needs to be accessible to Pacific communities and appropriately designed to provide value to those communities.

To address this inequity, when MPP luva back to communities it is not just the act of handing them a report or information pack, but it involves a talanoa with the community, an opportunity for them to give feedback on what is being gifted. It develops confidence in the data as a relevant and useful source, and helps to maintain trust in and nurture the relationships with communities from whom the data was collected.



## **PACIFIC ECONOMY RESEARCH REPORT ON UNPAID WORK AND VOLUNTEERING IN AOTEAROA – JULY**

Upon completion of the Pacific Economy Research Report, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples hosted four separate luva in July and August 2021 to communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. The impact of each regional luva was positive. The first luva was conducted on 6th August in Auckland, attended by Hon Aupito William Sio with Pacific matua, and community members representing the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Niue, Rotuma, Samoa, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Tonga and Pacific Youth communities. After an opening lotu and welcome, a presentation was delivered on key findings.

The luva involved the gifting of the final report and ethnic-specific reports to representatives from each of the Pacific communities. An opportunity was given to a community representative as part of the luva process to offer their feedback on the data given. The overarching feedback was that the cultural definitions on volunteering captured in the reports resonated with them. The luva reflected a process of gifting back to communities the final report to acknowledge the important role they played in providing the data needed to develop these findings.

## **IMPACT OF COVID-19 LOCKDOWN ON PACIFIC CHURCHES REPORT**

On 20th September 2021 an online luva was carried out following the completion of the “Impact of COVID-19 Lockdown on Pacific Churches” report. At the time, engagements with communities were largely carried out online due to COVID-19. It demonstrated that variations to face-to-face luva is possible as long as communities feel that it is a genuine expression of gifting. The report highlights four case studies based on churches and their response and recovery measures during the March to June 2020 COVID-19 lockdown. These four churches took part in the luva to provide feedback on the report. The feedback from church ministers highlighted how the report allowed for churches to learn from each other’s response to COVID-19.



### Mālie mo e Māfana: Inequity in data evaluation

Mālie is an expression that is often used in a Tongan cultural setting to show one's appreciation towards something, and the complexities and interplay between the component pieces that is involved.

In a consultation context, mālie signifies the evaluative process of ensuring that the consultation was worthwhile. Some considerations during this evaluative process include whether the communities it was designed to help would benefit from it, whether the process made sense, and whether it served the needs of the communities. There is a sense of mālie when the data that was produced from the consultation is seen as being beneficial to its intended audience. This is carried out throughout the data process. This is the transformational aspect of the consultation process whereby it leads to a solution to an existing problem and creates change.

In looking to the future of Pacific data, it was evident the majority of talanoa 'a kāinga participants supported the need for urgent system change to address the issues which lead to data inequities for Pacific peoples. Change was encouraged at all levels of the kakala process to support a data system that was equitable and envisioned Pacific communities to inform better decision making, investments and transformational outcomes for Pacific peoples.

This involved putting checks in place to ensure Pacific data can be accessed by Pacific communities, that they are involved early on at the design stage.

*"In regards to determining of course what quality Pacific data looks like. Making sure that there are checks in place to ensure that government agencies, when they're collecting that data, that the information is actually accessible for Pacific communities. So, it can be updated, and so it doesn't sit there and a report from 20 years still informs today"*

It was raised through the talanoa 'a kāinga groups that MPP could play an oversight role over the monitoring and maintenance of Pacific data in government, including being the central depository for all Pacific data. It was also raised that MPP works collaboratively with all agencies especially with Stats NZ to support a process for Pacific data equity.

*"Why don't we have a central repository of data that goes to one place, like Ministry for Pacific Peoples, who then can have a cultural lens and cultural analysis over that data? At the moment it's just sitting in different agencies, and they've got the particular cultural lens on it, but none of it is consolidated and it's dependant on particular individuals within those organisations. The variability of quality and capability and capacity, those are all the things that come with it. But be really useful to have something like that in my mind"*



It is acknowledged that there has been work aimed at improving data systems since the 1990's when Pacific people were able to self-identify as their specific Pacific ethnicities for the first time. While we can now compare rates and trends by Pacific specific ethnicities, the conceptualisation, collection, analysis and dissemination of Pacific data should be done in ways that reflect Pacific voices which can be achieved through Pacific involvement from beginning to end.

## **PACIFIC DATA INEQUITY IN EVALUATION**

### **AN EXAMPLE: EVALUATING PACIFIC DATA EQUITY IN GOVERNMENT THROUGH EXISTING INDIGENOUS FRAMEWORKS**

Existing indigenous frameworks offers a way to evaluate the quality of Pacific data to achieve equality. One such framework is that which has been developed by Bishop[17] for advocating for Māori data sovereignty. It is adapted and presented here as a 'stocktaking' exercise to highlight what is missing from the system and more importantly as proposals for systems change:

- The concept of tagata is institutionalised as the embodiment of Pacific data in its entirety
- The collection of Pacific data is collected person-to-person to ensure meaningful responses and greater coverage
- The data for Pacific peoples are readily accessible and is available in a timely and ongoing manner
- Administrative data has sufficient indicators of Pacific ethnicity to ensure larger samples sizes can be achieved and more meaningful data extracted from the Integrated Data Infrastructure
- It is possible to disaggregate the data for Pacific by key variables, such as Pacific ethnicity, age, sex, and location (as minimum requirements)
- The information is meaningful to Pacific stakeholders
- The information has been grounded in Pacific-led values, frameworks and principles
- The units of measurement include both Pacific individual and Pacific collective identities and are utilised consistently across the system
- The relevant definitions, classifications and methodologies have been developed by Pacific for Pacific and are utilised consistently across the system
- The system recognises the distinct Pacific institutions that exist within Pacific societies
- The system recognises the social, economic, environmental, and cultural areas of Pacific development
- Appropriate and standardised benchmarks and comparators have been developed for Pacific within the system.



The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) workshop in 2004<sup>50</sup> also provides examples related to the measurement process and data collection activities. These have been adapted below in relation to Pacific peoples:

- Include questions on Pacific identity in all relevant data collections
- Follow the principle of free prior and informed consent at all levels
- Ensure data collections are in accordance with human rights provisions, data protection regulations and privacy guarantees, including respect for confidentiality
- Participate in all stages of data collection including planning, implementation, analysis, dissemination, access and return with appropriate resourcing and capacity-building to do so
- Respond to the priorities and aims of the Pacific communities
- Where possible, conduct data collection exercises in Pacific languages
- Develop conceptual frameworks for rights-based indicators that are relevant for Pacific peoples
- Collect data specific to the situation of Pacific peoples, while also allowing comparability with other national and international populations.

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<sup>50</sup> [http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop\\_data\\_alderete.doc](http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop_data_alderete.doc)



# Chapter 4: Realising Pacific data equity

So far, this briefing has introduced the concepts of Pacific data, Pacific wellbeing, data equity and the relationships and dependencies between them. It has traced the changing trends of Pacific data from the historical to the status quo, highlighting examples from different government sectors that have contributed to Pacific data inequities.

This chapter will focus on how we can achieve Pacific data equity in a future where government data and information requirements are driven and informed by Pacific peoples, based on Pacific values and priorities; data is reflective and responsive to the Pacific population's diversity of cultures, languages, and identities. In this section we have set out 3 focus areas that provide a starting point to the road to Pacific data equity that have been informed by our talanoa 'a kāinga process.

## Focus Area 1: Collaborate and partner with Pacific peoples and communities

This briefing has presented a wide range of Pacific perspectives of current data practices and processes – with a common thread being that data is perceived to present deficit-based narratives that do not reflect the full realities of Pacific communities' and their inherent resilience, strength, and innovation. A key theme through the talanoa 'a kāinga was the critical importance of meaningful collaboration with Pacific peoples, communities, and organisations to create a system that captures these realities and aims to achieve Pacific data equity. We have outlined some options below to enable greater community collaboration and participation in the development of a data system that is community informed and driven and reflective of their needs.

Through Lalanga Fou, Pacific communities have clearly stated their desire to lead and drive their own innovative solutions. To this end, there are many ways the government can collaborate and partner with Pacific communities to gainfully move towards Pacific data equity.

## Invest in the capability, both of Pacific people and of entities led by Pacific people and communities

To support Pacific communities to contribute to the improvement of data quality in Aotearoa New Zealand, we need to provide them with the tools and resources to build their capability and knowledge to understand what data is, the vast data process and how this data is utilised across government. These tools and resources can help to raise data literacy to enable people to make better use of the vast amount of data available to them. Many Pacific communities may not fully understand the importance of their participation, or about consent, or accessibility or the ways in which information that is collected from them by government or how it has been analysed or used. It is important that Pacific peoples are supported to be able to contribute valuably towards achieving data equity. For example, one of the ways to improve data literacy for Pacific communities can be through targeted public awareness programmes on how the data they provide is used across government.





### Tailored data collection process to reflect the diversity of Pacific peoples

It is important to reiterate the diverse range of groups that are encompassed by the descriptor ‘Pacific peoples and communities’ and therefore the diverse range of groups that will be collaborators in this focus area. As this briefing has outlined, the official classification of Pacific populations encompasses over 17 distinct ethnic groups, each with their own cultures, languages, customs, religious beliefs, and world views. Pacific peoples are diverse in other respects too – the population is disproportionately youthful with many being born in Aotearoa with some, little or no acquisition of their native language.

A key theme through the talanoa ‘a kāinga process was the need to emphasise this diversity and nuance within the data landscape and to avoid the treatment of Pacific peoples as a homogenous group.

For example, one important step towards data equity that representative of the diversity of Pacific communities is to disaggregate data by ethnicity as part of standard practice across government. The analysis of total ethnicity, rather than prioritised ethnicity, would capture Pacific identity whenever it is included by a respondent, regardless of how many ethnicities a person has selected. Further, the disaggregation of various combination groups such as Pacific/Māori, Pacific/European, Pacific/Asian, Pacific all, Pacific only, non-Pacific would provide more specific information on the ethnic composition of the Pacific population.

### Enabling Pacific-led and driven data collection

Another pathway to Pacific data equity is through partnering with Pacific organisations to conduct and deliver community surveys within the communities they serve. For localised data collection, a model that could be considered is outsourcing the collection of data for Pacific peoples to Pacific community organisations to lead this process. These grassroots organisations are best placed to design and deliver on data collection surveys that are culturally appropriate and tailored towards the communities that they work within. However, there is a need to ensure that adequate resourcing and support is provided to these groups to deliver these types of services.

## Focus Area 2: All-of-Government approach to Pacific data

While there have been some improvements in government data practices as a whole, this briefing has canvassed some of the continued systemic issues with Pacific data, which are also experienced by other population groups such as tangata whenua and other ethnic minorities. A key theme in the talanoa ‘a kāinga was the need for an All-of-Government approach to improving Pacific data across the whole data landscape in terms of design/conceptualisation, collection, development, access, delivery, management, monitoring and evaluation of data and investments into improving quality, and in return better-informed decisions and outcomes.

Pacific data equity and the broader impacts of realising equity on Pacific wellbeing cannot be realised if these practices continue to inform policy advice and decision making. There is strong rationale for an all of government approach to Pacific data to address systemic issues. This focus area will be the most challenging and time consuming to implement due to the scale of change required, however there are existing work programmes and developments that can be leveraged to help agencies to start to make these shifts.



### Collaboration with Pacific communities

Taking an all-of-government approach will, in the first instance, require the collaboration with Pacific communities outlined in focus area one. By collaborating and partnering with Pacific peoples, we acknowledge their role as system stewards and experts and that they must be the primary benefactors from the use of Pacific data. Pacific communities would be participating at all levels of the data system to strengthen Pacific data equity. However, as outlined in Focus Area 1 this does require communities to have access to government data and information to inform their involvement in the data system. In turn this will lead to Pacific perspectives and lived realities influencing the government system through meaningful engagement in data design, collection, analysis, dissemination and use.

### Implementation of the Pacific Wellbeing Strategy to its fullest extent

The briefing earlier discusses the All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Strategy as a key enabler to work towards Pacific data equity as part of the Strategy's overall focus on the wellbeing of Pacific peoples. A by-product of this strategy is that it will enable the alignment of critical data across the public service to measure the impact of the collective efforts of government to achieve equitable outcomes for Pacific peoples and communities.

The impact of the strategy to deliver its objectives will be largely dependent on all government agencies committing to the vision and actions of the Pacific Wellbeing Strategy.

### All-of-Government Pacific data framework

To date, there have been some critical shifts in the Māori data space that can provide some useful models for working towards Pacific data equity. One of these is the development of a Māori Statistics Framework He Arotahi Tatauranga which is a tool to help those working in and around statistics for and about Māori to produce statistics about Māori wellbeing and development from a Māori perspective. Alongside this, Te Kupenga (Māori Social Survey) has enabled the collection of key statistics, not usually included in general population surveys, on four areas of Māori cultural wellbeing: wairuatanga (spirituality), tikanga (Māori customs and practices), Te reo Māori (the Māori language), and whanaungatanga (social connectedness). The findings from Te Kupenga have been used to inform both policy and non-government research.

The challenges that persist in the limitations around Māori data are similar to those outlined in this briefing in relation to the experiences that Pacific communities face. An all-of-Government approach to a Pacific data framework would be an important development to addressing some of the systemic issues that currently exist. As part of this, the development of a standalone Pacific household survey would provide a vehicle to operationalise an all-of-Government Pacific data framework, and in the process gain an invaluable picture of the social, cultural, and economic wellbeing of Pacific peoples.

This approach could build on the foundation laid by the Pacific Wellbeing Strategy to take a systems wide approach to improving Pacific data.



### Co-design/partnerships with Pacific data experts

The briefing highlights the need to walk alongside Pacific communities and experts in order to make positive progress. There is a growing pool of Pacific researchers, evaluators, data analysts/scientists, Pacific data groups and networks within Aotearoa which can be leveraged to provide technical assistance and support to agencies. An example is Stats NZ as well as the Pacific Data Sovereignty Network (PDSN) which has established the use of principles to guide the treatment and use of Pacific data. Groups such as the PDSN and leading Pacific data experts can be approached to co-design principles for the collection and use of Pacific data as an important step in initiating and setting the agenda for Pacific equity across government.

### Growing the Pacific workforce across the data system

In addition to greater and more meaningful partnerships with Pacific data experts, there is a need to grow the workforce of Pacific peoples with specialist Pacific data expertise across the government system. There are existing supports to build the pipeline in STEAM areas at present, including the Toloa programme that the Ministry for Pacific Peoples administers. The Toloa programme provides scholarships for young Pacific peoples who are studying in STEAM related areas. However, there is a demonstrated need to build a pipeline specifically for future data professionals.

### Growing Pacific expertise and cultural capability to support an equitable data eco-system across the public service

A strong narrative from the talanoa 'a kāinga was that Pacific statisticians or researchers are under-represented within government to provide a cultural lens over the data. In lieu, Pacific staff within agencies are having to provide cultural services. Developing pathways for Pacific people to take up these roles will be critical to progressing the work required to realise Pacific data equity.

Making a commitment to work with and for Pacific communities will require a significant increase in capability across the public service at all levels - government agencies, service delivery providers, policy analysts, data analysts and commissioners of research and evaluation – who are common users of Pacific data. There is a key area of development in the growing of Pacific cultural capability across government to inform the development, analysis and use of data relating to Pacific communities. There are existing resources to support the uplift of the Pacific cultural capability across the public sector:

- Kapasa: a tool for policy makers across government agencies to incorporate the needs, values, aspirations, and experiences of Pacific peoples in policy development. Kapasa encourages a strengths-based approach to policy development which will have an impact on Pacific peoples.
- Yavu: provides guidance on how to have engagement with Pacific peoples that is culturally responsive and sustainable. It outlines steps for effective engagement through building, nurturing and maintaining relationship.

The Yavu tool is a useful resource to help agencies who work in the collection of data from Pacific communities or in the development of data collection systems to consider effective ways of engaging with Pacific communities.

The Kapasa tool, while specifically tailored to policy development, also poses important questions to be considered as part of co-designing Pacific data related resources.



## Focus Area 3: Accountability and evaluation

While this chapter has highlighted some critical areas of change that will enable key systemic shifts for government data collection. An integral part of change is implementing the right control settings to measure and monitor any improvements to government data systems.

### Measuring and monitoring progress across government agencies

As outlined above, the All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Strategy focuses on levers for change at a system level across the following areas. A critical lever for change is through the establishment of an All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Outcomes Framework that includes a set of Pacific wellbeing indicators and measures to monitor the impact of agencies' Pacific programmes and projects.

The Pacific Wellbeing Outcomes Framework will be able to closely align and track Government agencies' impact on Pacific communities through their programmes and projects. This could be a mechanism to also monitor any institutional developments towards improving Pacific data across government. More broadly, the Outcomes Framework will also enable stewardship of Pacific programmes and projects which as a by-product will lead to improved data collection and collation on Pacific wellbeing outcomes that can be used in policy making and in the targeting of government investments.

### Time for change

It is clear that the inequities of the past, which have impacted adversely on the wellbeing of Pacific peoples, are being perpetuated at the present time, whether deliberately or unintentionally. The process began with societal preconceptions about people from the Pacific prior to their arrival in Aotearoa New Zealand – some positive, others negative – which made their way into government policies and practices. The settlement and integration of Pacific people into Aotearoa New Zealand has happened, by and large, without any attempt at institutionalising Pacific values and ways of being in the system that could have led to better, equitable lived experiences. Instead, the totality of government policies and their articulation, among them the deficit approach which continues to impact attempts at progress, have produced the status quo of social, economic and political shortcomings where Pacific peoples continue to lag behind all other ethnic groups. Notwithstanding historical and current challenges, we offer here an opportunity to 'turn the tide' in Pacific peoples' favour.





Ministry for  
**Pacific  
Peoples**

Te Manatū mō ngā Iwi o te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa