

4 July 2025

s9(2)(a)

Tālofa lava s9(2)(a)

RESPONSE TO AN OFFICIAL INFORMATION ACT REQUEST (REF: DOIA051-2024/25)

On 12 June 2025, you contacted the Ministry for Pacific Peoples (the Ministry) requesting under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA), a list of documents the Minister received during May 2025, and two Ministry OIA responses from May 2025. I have outlined your specific request and my response below.

Requesting under the OIA the following documents in full as listed below:

- *08.09.25 Briefing: Implementation of Artificial Intelligence, Provides you with information regarding the Ministry's implementation of Artificial Intelligence*
- *15.05.25 Briefing: Pacific data*
- *20.05.25 Aide memoire: Meeting with Pacific Island Forum Secretary General, Baron Waqa*
- *03.06.25 Aide memoire: Visit to Central Pacific Collective's Porirua development – Our Whare Our Fare*
- **OIAs:**
 - *DOIA040 Information about Microsoft Office expenditure. 13 May 2025*
 - *DOIA041 Information about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion regulation. 19 May 2025.*

Please note:

- The Briefing: Implementation of Artificial Intelligence was produced as a Memo and retitled as *Update on Generative AI*.
- The Briefing: Pacific data was retitled as *Incorporating better Pacific data into the IDI*.

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- The Aide Memoire: *Visit to Central Pacific Collective's Porirua Development – Our Whare Our Fale* was withdrawn as the Minister's visit was cancelled. Therefore, I have refused the Aide Memoire in full under section 18(e) of the OIA as the information requested does not exist.
- I have refused DOIA040-2024/25 and DOIA041-2024/25 in full under section 18(d) of the OIA as the information requested will soon be publicly available on the Ministry's website.

I have appended to this letter copies of the other information you have requested (refer to **Appendix 1**). Please note, I have listed the requested documents according to their official Ministry reference numbers and titles.

Please also note, some of the information in the requested documents have been withheld under:

- section 6(a) as the making available of this information would be likely to prejudice the international relations of the Government of New Zealand;
- section 6(b)(ii) as the making available of this information would be likely to prejudice the entrusting of information to the Government of New Zealand on a basis of confidence by any international organisation; and
- section 9(2)(a) to protect the privacy of natural persons.

I am satisfied that there are no public interest considerations that render it desirable to make the information in these documents that are withheld under section 6 and 9 of the OIA available.

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: uia_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 or freephone 0800 802 602.

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Lu Avia
Chief Advisor to the Secretary
Executive Office

Appendix 1 – List of documents

#	DATE	DOCUMENT TITLE	DECISION ON RELEASE
1	9 May 2025	MM028-2024/25 – Update on Generative AI.	Released in full.
2	14 May 2025	B030-2024/25 – Incorporating better Pacific data into the IDI.	Some information withheld under s9(2)(a).
3	20 May 2025	AM034-2024/25 – Bilateral meeting with Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Baron Waqa.	Some information withheld under: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • s6(a) • s6(b)(ii) • s9(2)(a).

Memo

Reference: **MM028-2024/25**Security level: **In-confidence**

Update on Generative AI

Date	9 MAY 2025
To	Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister for Pacific Peoples
From	Danilo Coelho de Almeida, Deputy Secretary, Corporate & Support Services

Purpose

1. This memo provides an update on the Ministry of Pacific Peoples' (the Ministry's) progress in implementing safe Generative AI (GenAI) tools to enhance organisational productivity.

Background

2. The Ministry recognises the transformative potential of GenAI tools for organisational productivity and has commenced a structured approach for implementation.
3. This approach helps prepare the Ministry respond to encouragement from the Public Service Commissioner and Minister for Public Services to adopt AI more widely. It also provides a roadmap for strategic AI investments, ensuring the Ministry understands the value generated.
4. By following a well-devised approach, it ensures that AI benefits the Ministry safely through a focused implementation programme. This project equips the Ministry with the tools necessary to confidently embrace AI, thereby boosting productivity and impact for Pacific communities.

Project approach

5. The project aims to increase awareness and understanding among the Ministry's staff of the rapid evolution of GenAI tools. The Ministry has focussed on exploring "the art of the possible" and ensuring that appropriate safeguards are in place for safe and responsible use.
6. **Phase 1** focused on organisational readiness. The key activities completed to date include:
 - a. AI Executive Masterclass to empower teams with ambition and confidence
 - b. targeted interviews to assess knowledge and perceptions related to the adoption of GenAI tools
 - c. AI capability assessment to gauge current capabilities and outline future ambitions

- d. AI Fundamentals workshop, providing all staff with foundational knowledge about the transformative potential of AI tools, demystifying AI, and discussing associated benefits and risks
 - e. brainstorming sessions to compile potential AI use cases applicable to daily work across each directorate.
7. In the next few weeks, the Ministry will have completed **Phase 2**, which has been focused on ensuring that the appropriate safeguards are in place to use AI tools in a safe and responsible way. It has been critical to have these foundations in place to help give staff the confidence to increase their use of the tools available. The key activities in this phase included:
 - a. developing a risk response framework to identify and mitigate AI adoption risks
 - b. defining the Ministry's risk appetite for using GenAI tools
 - c. establishing a governance structure (utilising existing forums) to oversee privacy, security, and data management practices.
 8. In **Phase 3**, the Ministry's focus shifts to developing an AI Strategy, outlining how AI tools will be integrated into daily work while ensuring the necessary safeguards. By taking a deliberate approach to how AI is used, the Ministry can stay ahead of the curve by actively managing how AI fits into our work, rather than letting it catch us off guard. By being proactive, the Ministry can unlock AI's potential while ensuring that the appropriate safeguards are in place to enable confident adoption of AI.
 9. The Ministry will also develop a short Investment Case to make smart, targeted investments that will unlock value to the Ministry.
 10. In parallel, the Ministry is also progressing a "proof of concept", which means that there will be an opportunity to practically test the Responsible AI framework in real time to learn and iterate. This involves the development of an AI assistant to synthesise and theme the qualitative feedback on the Ministry's Long-term Insights Briefing. This allows the Ministry to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of traditional methods versus AI-assisted consultation processes.

Next steps

11. Officials can provide further information about this topic at your request.

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**Briefing**

Reference: B030-2024/25

Security level: In-confidence

Incorporating better Pacific data into the IDI

Date	14 MAY 2025	For	Discussion or Approval
To	Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister for Pacific Peoples		

Ministry contacts

NAME	POSITION	TELEPHONE	1ST CONTACT
Dr James Greenwell	Acting Deputy Secretary, Policy & Insights	s9(2)(a)	✓

Purpose

1. This briefing provides advice regarding the value of incorporating more Pacific data into the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI). It also provides information about what Pacific data could be incorporated into the IDI and how this could be done.

Key messages

2. The Ministry for Pacific Peoples (the Ministry) is the Crown's domain lead for data related to Pacific peoples and has a responsibility to ensure Pacific data is of high quality and used effectively by government agencies.
3. The Ministry works closely with Stats NZ to improve the quality linkage rates and usage of Pacific data contained in the IDI, including ethnicity DATA. The Ministry (and other government agencies) rely on accurate, timely, high-quality data in order to provide robust advice to Government to support investment in critical services.
4. The IDI is a database of potentially linkable datasets containing individual level information sourced mainly from government administrative data, censuses, and household surveys conducted by Stats NZ and other government departments. A key advantage of the IDI is the ability to link these large-scale data sets together which expands the scope of information available.
5. The benefits of more accurate data in the IDI (such as ethnicity, household, and deprivation data) are likely to outweigh any potential increased administrative costs for agencies by enabling more effective evidence-based decision-making ensuring policy implementation successfully achieves investment outcomes.

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6. Pacific peoples have distinct, ethnic, family and household characteristics that are not fully registered in administrative data and, historically, Pacific peoples have been underrepresented and not adequately captured in government data. Pacific peoples are also one of the fastest growing populations in New Zealand and have a younger age structure than the total population (24.9 years compared to 38.1 years).
7. There are variable and volatile patterns of population change, both nationally and locally. Without accurate population statistics it is difficult to reliably predict impacts of populations trends on service demand, infrastructure, and social needs.
8. The shift to an administrative data-first approach proposed by Stats NZ in the 'Next Census' work programme represents the greatest transformation in official statistics since the census was established in 1851. This approach provides an impetus to address data quality issues for Pacific peoples. It also presents significant risk as current census data is more comprehensive and higher quality than administrative data.
9. Strong data leadership across government is essential to ensure the IDI provides the quality of information required to support evidence-based decision making and achieve social investment outcomes for Pacific peoples.
10. There are opportunities for the Ministry to work together with Stats NZ to incorporate more Pacific data in the IDI and to improve the quality of Pacific data.

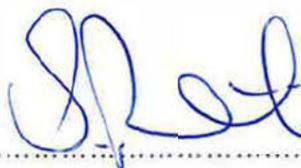
Recommendations

11. It is recommended that you:

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| <p>a. Note in 2024 the Ministry and Stats NZ signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to foster collaboration. It positions the Ministry as domain lead for government data about Pacific peoples and establishes an All-of-Government Pacific Data Advisory Group.</p> | <p>NOTED</p> |
| <p>b. Note an improved IDI incorporating more high-quality Pacific data is an essential tool to support better policy decision-making and address data inequities for Pacific peoples.</p> | <p>NOTED</p> |
| <p>c. Note the 'Next Census' work programme provides opportunities to address data quality issues for Pacific peoples.</p> | <p>NOTED</p> |
| <p>d. Agree to Ministry officials commencing discussions with Stats NZ to resolve data gaps, incorporate new data, and develop new data quality measures in the IDI, and report back on a proposed joint work programme.</p> | <p>YES / NO</p> |



Dr James Greenwell
Acting Deputy Secretary, Policy & Insights
Ministry for Pacific Peoples
Date: 14 May 2025



Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister for Pacific peoples
Date: 14/5/2025

Background

12. Following recent discussion with officials you directed the Ministry to provide a briefing regarding the value of incorporating more Pacific data into the IDI including:
- Why better Pacific data is needed.
 - The costs and benefits of incorporating more Pacific data.
 - What additional Pacific data could be incorporated.
 - How more Pacific data could be incorporated.
13. The Ministry, as the Crown's domain lead for Pacific data, is responsible for ensuring that Pacific data is of high quality and used effectively, strengthening relationships with agencies across government.
14. The Ministry's data and insights work programme is informed by findings from its Performance Improvement Review (May 2024), and its 2023 Long-term Insights Briefing (LTIB) '*Improving Pacific Data Equity: Opportunities to Enhance the Future of Pacific Wellbeing*'¹.
15. The Ministry has actively contributed to government data initiatives, including:
- a. Advice on the 2028 Census Cabinet paper, and ongoing work [AM049-2023/24 refers].
 - b. Jointly raising data quality concerns with the Ministry of Health and Health NZ to Stats NZ, providing feedback on the '*Accelerating Social Investment*' Cabinet paper which commented on the value of the IDI.
 - c. Contributing to the Independent Evaluation Panel briefing on '*Next Census*' titled '*Impact and opportunities of future census design options on Pacific data*'.
16. A 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) supports the Ministry to work closely with Stats NZ on understanding and improving the quality and usage of Pacific data contained in the IDI and positions the Ministry as domain lead for government data about Pacific peoples.

¹ Ministry for Pacific Peoples – Improving Pacific Data Equity: Opportunities to Enhance the Future of Pacific Wellbeing - 2.-Appendix-1-The-Ministrys-LTIB-Pacific-Data-Equity-Opportunities-to-Enhance-the-Future-of-Pacific-Wellbeing.pdf

Additionally, an All-of-Government Pacific Data Advisory Group is being established to guide cross-agency efforts on future censuses and government data quality issues.

Why is better Pacific data needed in the IDI?

17. Variable data quality standards with the IDI (for example ethnicity and address/location data) significantly impact on accuracy and reliability of information about Pacific peoples to inform the evidence base for policy and investment decision-making.
18. Although incorporating additional Pacific data into the IDI may result in increased administrative costs for agencies in the short term, the benefits of more accurate, quality data in the IDI are likely to outweigh these costs in terms of enabling more effective evidence-based decision making that ensures policy implementation successfully achieves investment outcomes.

A clear purpose for data collection and informed trust in use of data is important for data integrity

19. Data should be intentionally collected with a clear purpose. Collecting new information without informed decisions about its use can be a waste of resources and add to respondent burden. Data only becomes meaningful if we know how it will be used to build understanding, inform decision-making, assist problem solving, and recognise system/process improvements.
20. Social licence is also important for working with data and that in turn requires ongoing and informed public conversations. Research by Stats NZ suggests the public does not know enough about the IDI to give informed trust².

Addressing data quality issues in the IDI will improve evidence-based decision-making and lead to better social investment outcomes

21. There are currently some issues with the level of data reported in the IDI. The diversity of New Zealand's Pacific population is often masked in official statistics, as referenced in the Ministry's inaugural LTIB. While ethnicity data is usually collected at a detailed level, it is mainly reported at an aggregated level.
22. This means that data on specific Pacific populations is usually grouped under the 'Pacific' umbrella term and not specific Pacific ethnic groups. This lack of granularity means government decision making processes do not address the needs of specific populations, and communities cannot get the information they need to inform local action.
23. Generating statistics for specific Pacific ethnic groups is important to identify differential need that would otherwise be masked by the presentation of aggregated data, application of inconsistent data standards, and poor data quality and analysis.

² Statistics New Zealand – A social licence approach to trust - [A social licence approach to trust | Stats NZ](#)

The 'Next Census' work programme has implications for the quality of data in the IDI

24. Potential changes or reduction in data access and quality due to 'Next Census' may create risks that decisions being made about targeted investment for essential services are poorly informed. This may result in higher costs for government, inefficient use of resources, inequity of service delivery, and inability to evaluate programme impacts. As census data ages government agencies will also become more reliant on administrative data to inform decision-making.
25. Although the Ministry supports census modernisation, to the extent it may result in significant cost savings and provide opportunities to address data quality issues for Pacific peoples (including undercount of the Pacific population in official statistics³), the proposed approach does carry substantial data quality risks:
- Some variables that are essential to understanding New Zealand's population (i.e. ethnicity, disability status, gender and sexuality, area-based deprivation, family, and housing characteristics) are either incomplete, inaccurate, or not available in administrative data.
 - It may take many years before administrative data can be effectively used to understand population dynamics and attributes to a high standard.
26. There are data gaps that will not be overcome by supplementary surveys proposed in the Cabinet paper leading to significant under-representation of Pacific peoples, resulting in limited and imprecise data on households and communities.

What additional data could be incorporated into the IDI?

27. Being able to accurately identify the Pacific population is fundamental to IDI analysis, and this requires good quality ethnicity data. There are known issues with ethnicity data in the IDI including underreporting, inconsistency across data collections and the unavailability of detailed ethnicity data.
28. Census ethnicity data is considered to be the gold standard and used to assess administrative data quality. If quality ethnicity, NZDep⁴ and social attributes data is not available in the future due to impacts of census modernisation, this will impact Pacific IDI projects unless the quality of administrative data can be improved to an adequate level.
29. The following data improvements to the IDI could be considered to better support Pacific data analysis.

³ Sonder GJB et al. [Selective under-representation of Pacific peoples in population estimates for health indicator measurements in Aotearoa New Zealand misinforms policy making - PubMed](#). BMC Public Health 2024;24(1):564

⁴ Statistics New Zealand – New Zealand index of socioeconomic deprivation: Census 2023 - [New Zealand index of socioeconomic deprivation: 2023 Census | Stats NZ](#)

Extension of ethnicity data in the Stats NZ Person Details table

30. Data inaccuracies limit social research and social investment approaches for Pacific ethnic groups. Stats NZ could invest in extending the Person Details table to at least level 2 ethnicity to facilitate wider use of the IDI for social investment research and evaluation for Pacific ethnic groups.
31. The Person Details Table is used to determine ethnicity within the IDI environment and ranks the source of ethnicity data using sources with the highest quality first (i.e. Census data first, then Department of Internal Affairs birth data, followed by other administrative data). Accordingly, this source of ethnicity data is the most complete with the lowest number of inaccurate ethnicity data sources.
32. Currently, only level 1 ethnicity is available which groups all Pacific ethnic groups into Pacific peoples. This means that time consuming analysis in the IDI is required to determine ethnicity for distinct Pacific ethnic groups. These methods are not easily reproducible and may contain large undercounts in Pacific peoples for distinct Pacific identities.

Reported population quality measures for data related to Pacific peoples

33. Population data quality measures for Pacific peoples will help identify opportunities to improve administrative data collection practices to ensure government can collect the data needed to resolve well-documented gaps and biases, resulting in more reliable data.

Improved Household composition data to better understand New Zealand population dynamics

34. Identifying household composition and family type is crucial to understand the changing dynamics of New Zealand's population and how to appropriately orient services to be future focused. Pacific peoples are a younger population with distinct family and household characteristics, and public service needs relative to the total population that are not fully registered in administrative data.

How could we do it?

35. Subject to your agreement, the Ministry would work with Stats NZ, as lead agency for government-held data through our MoU, to support government agencies to collect better quality and representative data that is focused on improving outcomes. This would include consideration of the adaptability of population statistics needed and how government can draw more value out of the IDI.
36. Working with Stats NZ, the actions described in the table below would enhance the Ministry's role as domain lead for Pacific data and improve the quality of data incorporated in the IDI. Please note that some of these actions would not be led by the Ministry.

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS	MEDIUM-TERM ACTIONS	LONGER-TERM ACTIONS
Produce administrative data quality table disaggregated for Pacific peoples (by level 4 and additional Census indicators).	Understand 2028 (and future) Census implications for Pacific peoples and data quality using the IDI.	Review existing data standards for agencies contributing data to the IDI (i.e., name, DoB, address) to ensure accurate and quality data is provided.
Publish the findings of the Future Census Independent Evaluation Panel.	Support agencies to improve the quality and completeness of IDI metadata and data.	Mandate new data standards (e.g. ethnicity) to improve data analysis and evidence-based decision-making.
Scope the potential for the Leo Moana survey (run every 5 years) to be added to the IDI moving forward which could address data gaps for Pacific languages spoken.	Update the Principles and Protocols for Producers of Tier 1 Statistics to provide levers for accountability and critical appraisal (including updating roles and responsibilities for the official statistics system).	Focus on improvements, investment and research into a gold standard dwelling register and population register to support improved administrative data quality and survey design.
		Understand public trust/social licence issues, data sovereignty implications for IDI data, and uses for social investment purposes
		Develop new survey techniques and instruments to replace information loss and to improve Pacific data equity.

Key risk and mitigations

37. Risks associated with use of the IDI and proposed mitigations are outlined below. Please note that the Ministry would not be responsible for most of these risks but may influence across the system where appropriate.

RISK	MITIGATION
Lack of and inconsistent application of data standards can reduce the quality of data linkages for Pacific peoples.	Ensure that mandated data is collected to the specified Stats NZ standard and assess (review and audit) where improvements are needed.
In the absence of a full Census and the move to an administrative data-first approach an outdated dwelling register and lack of a population register will have consequential impacts for data equity.	Ensure that mandated data is collected to the specified Stats NZ standard and assess where improvement and additional investment is needed.
Unclear purpose for data, inappropriate use of data, and poor oversight of data may result in data inequity. Metadata is incomplete and does not include time stamps for all administration variables.	Provide clear standards, description of roles and responsibilities, and oversight. Direct agencies and Stats NZ to keep IDI metadata up to date.

RISK	MITIGATION
Insufficient legal basis, lack of social licence, and falling public trust in the use of the IDI for social investment analysis.	Review the Data and Statistics Act 2022, Privacy Act 2020, and Electoral Act 1993 to ensure legal obligations relative to new Social Investment objectives are addressed. Carry out public engagement and consultation on the use and benefits of the IDI.
Poor quality or missing demographic data and data quality indicators prevent an authoritative understanding of Pacific peoples at a point in time from the IDI.	Investment in survey programmes to develop new sampling techniques.

Next steps

38. Continue to work with Stats NZ and other agencies to improve the quality and usage of Pacific data in the IDI.
39. Subject to your agreement, commence discussions with Stats NZ to identify additional Pacific data to be incorporated in the IDI and report back on a proposed joint work programme.

Aide memoire

Reference: AM034-2024/25

Bilateral meeting with Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General, Baron Waqa

Date	20 MAY 2025
To	Hon Dr Shane Reti, Minister for Pacific Peoples
Meeting details	<p>Date: 22 May 2025</p> <p>Time: 12:00pm - 12:20pm</p> <p>Venue: Minister Reti's Office – 5.1 Executive Wing, Parliament</p> <p>Key contact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. MPP: James Greenwell, Interim Deputy Secretary – Policy and Insights Mobile: s9(2)(a) 2. MFAT: Hollie Anderson, Policy Officer, Pacific Regional Division Mobile: s9(2)(a)

Purpose

1. This aide memoire provides you with information to support your bilateral meeting with Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretary General, Baron Waqa [*Wong-ga*] and his delegation on 22 May 2025. Proposed talking points have been provided in **Appendix One**.

Attendees

2. Baron Waqa will be in attendance with Political Governance Adviser Jonetani Tagivetaua. Short biographies for the Secretary General and his delegation have been included in **Appendix Two**.
3. Officials who will support you at the meeting are:
 - a. Ministry for Pacific Peoples: Gerardine Clifford-Lidstone, Secretary for Pacific Peoples.
 - b. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade:
 - i. Bernadette Cavanagh, Deputy Secretary, Pacific and Development Group
 - ii. Karen Murray, Divisional Manager, Development People and Planet Division
 - iii. Hollie Anderson, Policy Officer, Pacific Regional Division.

Key objectives of the bilateral meeting

4. There are three areas of importance for your upcoming meeting:
 - a. **Reinforce** New Zealand's commitment to strengthening Pacific regionalism and embedding PIF centrality.
 - b. **Discuss** the people-centred (health and education) development challenges facing the Pacific, acknowledging the PIF's role in responding to them regionally and globally.
 - c. **Affirm** New Zealand's commitment to supporting a healthy and educated Pacific population, reinforcing our deeply shared values and aspirations for a prosperous, resilient, stable, and peaceful Pacific.

Background information

Baron Waqa is the Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General

5. The PIF Secretariat is led by the Secretary General, supported by two Deputies. The Secretariat's role is primarily policy advice, coordination, and implementation of PIF Leaders' decisions. In addition to leading the PIF Secretariat, the Secretary General also acts as permanent Chair of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP).

Overview of the Pacific Islands Forum

6. PIF is the region's pre-eminent political organisation for Pacific Leaders to make decisions, build consensus, and act on shared challenges. PIF brings together 18 Member countries to chart the Pacific's regional policy agenda and respond to priority issues.¹ It provides an opportunity for the Pacific to publicly articulate shared goals and aspirations, and to reinforce the norms and values we want to see embedded globally. The principal political mechanism for convening the Membership is the annual meeting of Leaders, with this year's gathering to be held in Honiara, Solomon Islands from 8-12 September.
7. New Zealand is a founding Member of the PIF. This reflects our commitment to regionalism, and the importance New Zealand attaches to rules-based organisations as a mechanism for safeguarding the sovereignty of all states, regardless of their size. s6(a)

[REDACTED] New Zealand has an enduring commitment to reinforcing the centrality of PIF and its ability to deliver on the region's collective priorities, as outlined in the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent* (2050 Strategy).

¹ Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu. Tokelau, Guam, American Samoa, and Wallis and Futuna are Associate Members

New Zealand's contributions to the PIF Secretariat

8. The Secretariat is funded by contributions from Member governments and donors. New Zealand provides:
 - a. NZ\$4,360,000 annually to the PIFS' primary budget (representing a quarter of the Secretariat's primary budget)
 - b. NZ\$300,000 annually to a Staffing Support Fund for PIFS to meet immediate staffing needs s6(b)(ii)
 - c. NZ\$150,000 annually to the New York Support Fund to employ a PIF coordinator (located with the PIF Chair, currently Tonga) to assist with facilitating cooperation between PIF Members at the United Nations.

You visited Tonga for 53rd PIF Leader's Meeting in August 2024

9. You accompanied the Deputy Prime Minister's (DPM) delegation to attend the first half of the PIF Leader's Meeting, held over 25-27 August 2024 in Nuku'alofa, Tonga. You participated in the DPM's programme which included church services, launches, key leader's meetings and bilateral meetings [B009-2024/25 refers].
10. You also took part in two separate health engagements which were a panel discussion organised by UNICEF on the importance of the first 1,000 days of a child's life in the Pacific region and a bilateral meeting with Hon Dr Siale Akau'ola, Tonga's previous Minister of Health.
11. The Review of the Regional Architecture (RRA) was also endorsed and has begun to ensure regional governance mechanisms are fit-for-purpose, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of Pacific Island countries and the 2050 Strategy.

Potential areas of interest for the bilateral meeting*2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent is the Forum's long-term plan*

12. PIF Leaders in 2019 commissioned the development of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent (the Strategy). The primary purpose was to "secure the region's future", which included determining the region's priorities in an effort to protect the people, places and prospects in the Blue Pacific. The Strategy was launched in 2022, with Leaders endorsing an Implementation Plan a year later.
13. You might like to affirm with the Secretary General that New Zealand supports the Strategy as the shared vision for our region's future, and the articulation of priorities for collective action and partner engagement that is Pacific led.

Health was a key area of focus at the Leaders Forum last year

14. New Zealand agreed on the need to address the key issues raised at the 53rd PIF Leaders Meeting in 2024. These issues included the ongoing escalation of the noncommunicable Disease (NCD) crisis, complex health workforce challenges both nationally and regionally,

vulnerability of the region's health systems to climate change effects and building more resilient healthcare systems in the Pacific.

The Conference of Pacific Education Ministers confirmed Education as a key priority for the Pacific Region

15. New Zealand remains a champion for education in the Pacific Region and is valued as a partner by Pacific nations. At the 2025 Conference of Pacific Education Ministers (CPEM) that you attended, the Status of Pacific Education Report 2024 was launched and Ministers agreed to address the following:
 - a. grow support for teachers in the region
 - b. strengthen resilience of learners through Pacific identity, culture, arts and languages
 - c. grow support for inclusive education
 - d. provide learning outcomes that are culturally and spiritually relevant in early childhood education
 - e. develop assistance for education providers to manage Artificial Intelligence and ICT
 - f. grow technical and vocational education and training programmes
 - g. highlight the need for collaboration with health and other relevant sectors to ensure support for health and wellbeing in schools.
16. Having the CPEM outcome statement endorsed at the PIF Leaders Meeting this year would provide the necessary direction for the region to set priorities and achieve collective outcomes in the education sector.

Ministry contact: James Greenwell, Interim Deputy Secretary – Policy and Insights s9(2)(a)

Appendix 1: Proposed talking points

Welcome Baron Waqa

- Welcome Secretary General Waqa to Wellington, his first visit to the capital in his capacity as head of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat.
- **Note** the value we place upon the PIF as the region's pre-eminent political organisation for Leaders to respond to priority issues and chart the region's course in pursuit of its ambitions, including as outlined in the *2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent*.

New Zealand has a strong relationship with the Forum

- As a founding member, New Zealand has remained a committed and reliable partner, actively contributing and offering steady support
- [*You may wish to share some personal observations from your time at the PIF Leaders Meeting last year in Nuku'alofa, Tonga*].

New Zealand's Priorities for the PIF

- The Government is committed to strengthening Pacific regionalism and embedding PIF centrality. In an increasingly complex world, New Zealand desires a unified Forum capable of preserving Pacific sovereignty and agency. A trusted and effective Secretariat is crucial in this regard.
- **Seek** the Secretary General's views on his experience leading the organisation to date.
- **Note** the value the Pacific diaspora in New Zealand places on regional connectivity.
- **Enquire** about how PIF can improve connectivity and regional integration more broadly.

Overarching Health and Education Points

- New Zealand acknowledges the Forum's leadership on the Review of the Regional Architecture (RRA), which provides valuable insights to strengthen regional health and education systems making them more coherent, better aligned, and more accountable in line with the *2050 Strategy*.
- Having both health and education as standing agenda items at the Forum Leaders Meeting enables the development of joint priorities for collective action. It also supports coordinated solutions to address critical issues, improving outcomes for all Pacific peoples, particularly our vulnerable and marginalised communities.

Health

- Working with Forum Members, New Zealand supports Pacific countries to achieve their health goals and to fulfil regional commitments. We recognise that healthy populations

and resilient and responsive health systems are vital for regional health security, and social and economic prosperity in the Pacific.

- New Zealand supports the focus on health at the Leaders' level, recognising it as a vital step toward regional action on pressing issues like noncommunicable diseases, health workforce needs, and climate resilience.
- This underscores the importance of investing in health and importantly provides Leaders with an opportunity to identify and mobilise action across sectors to address evolving health and development priorities.

Education

- New Zealand's education investments in the Pacific contribute to the achievement of national and regional education priorities and set a foundation for social resilience and human-centred development.
- The Status of Pacific Education Report 2024 indicates that as a region, significant work is needed to address education standards, literacy and numeracy rates and teacher quality. Through its International Development Cooperation (IDC) Programme, New Zealand will continue to support investment to achieve results in these areas, including by working through regional frameworks and mechanisms.
- New Zealand would like to see the outcome statement from the 2025 Conference of Pacific Education Ministers being endorsed by Leaders at the Forum Leaders Meeting in Honiara, Solomon Islands. This would give the region the direction needed to set priorities and achieve collective outcomes in the education sector.
- *[You may like to share your own personal reflections on CPEM].*

Appendix 2: Biographies of attendees



Baron Waqa – Secretary General of the Pacific Island Forum

Baron Waqa has been in his current role at the Forum Secretariat since June 2024. He is responsible for the management of the PIF Secretariat and its delivery of regional priorities mandated by Leaders.

Baron Waqa was President of Nauru from 2013-2019. He also served as Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Police and Emergency Services, Public Service and Climate Change.



Jonetani Tagivetaua – Political Governance Adviser

Jonetani Tagivetaua has served in his current role at the Forum Secretariat since February 2023. Prior to that, he worked at the Fijian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including as Director for Oceania and Americas Bureau from 2020-2023. He also undertook a diplomatic posting to Australia from 2011-2015.