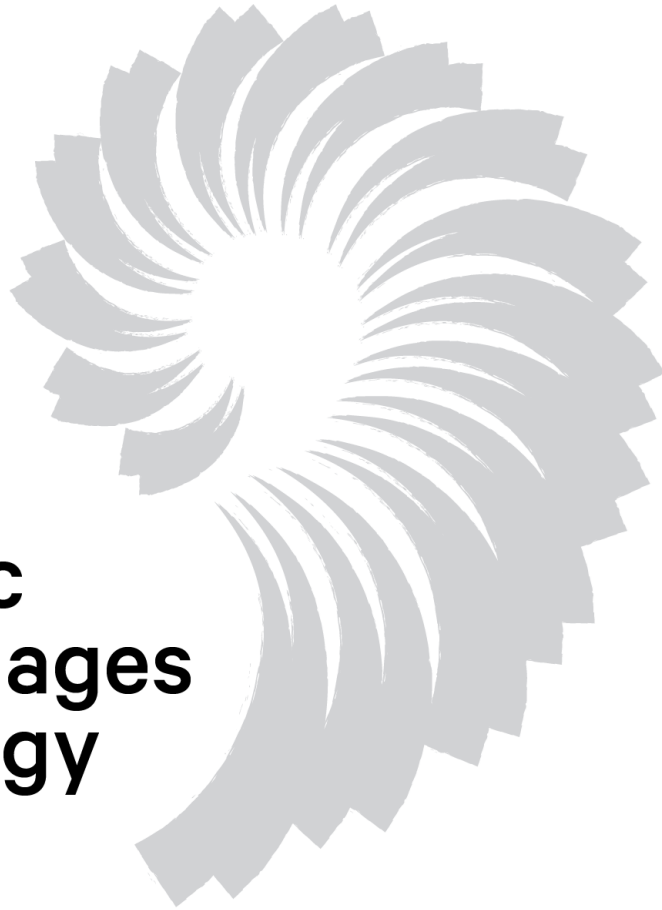


Pacific Languages Strategy



**Pacific Languages Strategy –
for targeted consultation**

DRAFT



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Thriving Pacific Languages in Pacific Aotearoa

Introduction

As articulated in a proverb birthed from *filiga 'afa* (the act of making coconut sennit to produce a durable, sustainable rope), ***O le aso ma le filiga, o le aso fo'i ma le mata'igatila*** – we look to the horizon for new ways of moving forward whilst keeping both the past and the present at the forefront of our minds and actions.

This proverb underpins the intention of this Pacific Languages Strategy and relates the concept of weaving and binding to the work needed to support Indigenous Pacific languages in Aotearoa New Zealand. The process of *filiga 'afa* is not only about the action of weaving together existing strands but is intentional in selecting the best strands to make the *'afa* to ensure that it is strong and sustainable. This proverb also reminds us that preparation for the future must be informed by the work undertaken in both the past and the present.

There is a long history of Pacific communities and language champions drawing on their innovation, creativity, and resourcefulness to maintain Pacific languages. This Strategy aims to weave and bind together the strands of Pacific languages work from Pacific communities, as well as across Government, to deliver an enduring and sustainable vision to ensure our Pacific languages are thriving in Aotearoa New Zealand.

An overview of Pacific languages in Aotearoa

Pacific communities have been at the forefront of language preservation since the initial waves of migration to Aotearoa New Zealand. Through their efforts, we have seen the establishment of Pacific language nests and learning opportunities in schools, radio networks and written media, and education organisations throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. The advances in teaching, learning, and promoting Pacific languages is a direct result of the strong support from Pacific communities.

Currently, Aotearoa New Zealand society is predominantly monolingual with English as the common language. Indigenous Pacific languages have come under increasing pressure from the effects of public monolingualism in New Zealand, and English is becoming more prominent in spaces that have been bastions of Pacific language maintenance, such as in homes and churches.

While the use of Pacific languages in Aotearoa New Zealand has continued, this has often been confined to private domains. The limited value-perception of Pacific languages outside of these domains has contributed to a decline in the number of Pacific language speakers across generations, and throughout Aotearoa New Zealand. The decline of Indigenous Pacific languages carries with it a loss of Pacific knowledges, histories, and genealogical connections.

We know that Pacific languages are inseparable from Pacific cultures and identities, and that Pacific cultures thrive if Pacific languages thrive¹. For Pacific peoples, language, culture, and identity are the fundamental cornerstones of overall wellbeing². Research³ affirms the importance of cultural practices in enabling Pacific communities to respond to new ideas and challenges in an ever-changing global context. It is crucial that the deeper meanings of Pacific cultural practices are well understood through the lenses that Pacific languages provide.

While families play the most important role in increasing the use and value of Pacific languages – we know that our Pacific families are struggling to carry this work on their own. For many years, the successes and efforts of Pacific communities have been undervalued by a predominantly deficit approach to Pacific peoples. As a result, Pacific peoples continue to experience pervasive, persistent

¹ Ole Taea Afua - The New Morning - A qualitative investigation into Samoan perspectives on mental health and culturally appropriate services. Taimalieutu Kiwi Tamasese, Maiava Carmel Peteru & Charles Waldegrave (1997).

² Culture, Wellbeing, and the Living Standards Framework: A Perspective. Paul Dalziel, Caroline Saunders & Catherine Savage – prepared for the Ministry for Culture and Heritage, and the Treasury (2019).

³ Nga vaka o kaininga tapu - A Pacific conceptual framework to address family violence in New Zealand. Pasefika Proud (2012).

and increasingly widening social and economic inequities⁴ which have directly impacted Pacific families and left many parents and caregivers with limited time and resources to teach, use, learn and enrich our Pacific languages.

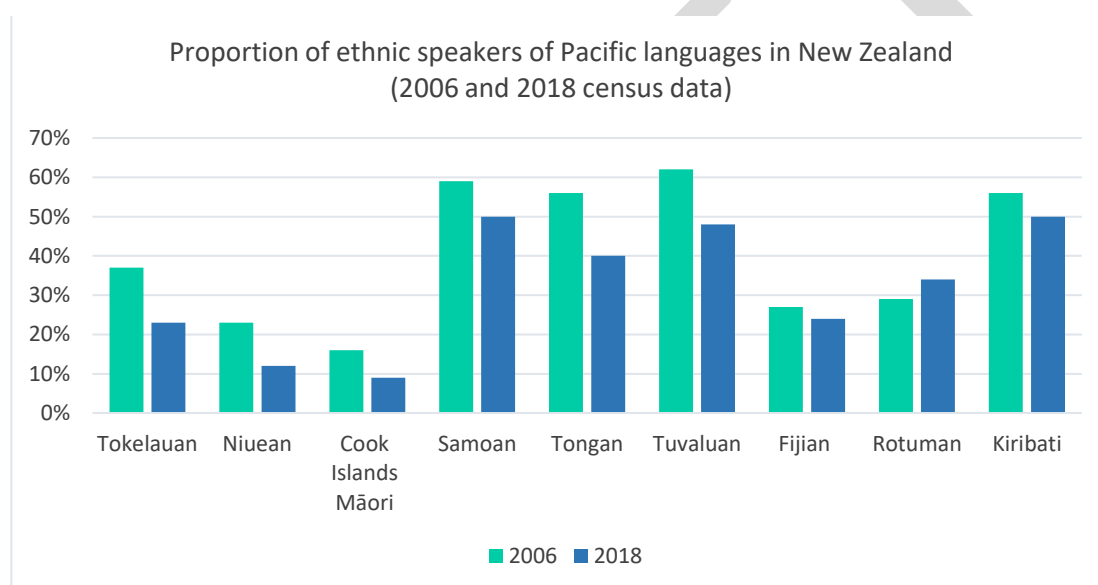
The number of speakers is declining across all Pacific languages. Age breakdown statistics show the alarming lack of next generation speakers and signals a radical need for innovative ways to grow critical awareness around the cultural, social *and* economic value of Pacific languages. For this to happen, we need coordinated, cross-sector planning and policy with the right support structures for revitalisation and retention.

To ensure this Strategy understands and aligns with the needs of Pacific communities, it is critical that their voices guide the direction of this work, and that Government is responsive to those voices.

Where are we now: Pacific language-use is in rapid decline

In Aotearoa New Zealand, English is the most common language. According to the 2018 census, 95% of New Zealanders can speak English and 78% are monolingual (almost always in English).

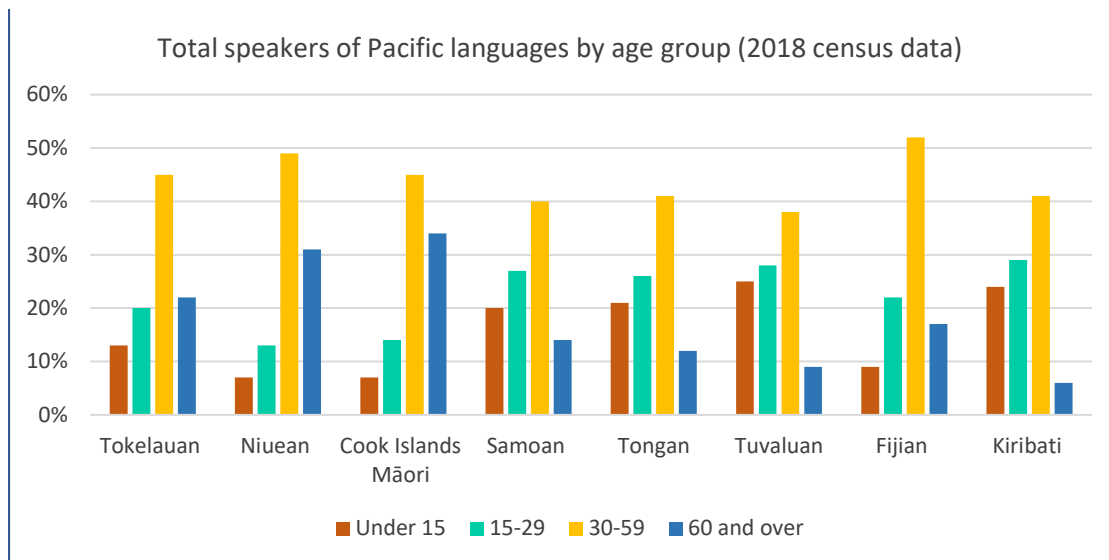
Over the last 15 years, there has been a significant reduction in the proportion of ethnic speakers of Pacific languages⁵:



When we break down current Pacific language speakers by age group, the statistics are concerning, with some groups having as few as 7% of those under the age of 15 able to speak the language.

⁴ For example, Pacific net worth is at a median of \$12,000 compared to the \$87,000 median for all New Zealanders. In addition, Pacific median income is the lowest against other ethnic groups at \$19,700. Pacific economic trends and snapshot 2016. New Zealand Institute of Economic Research report to the Ministry for Business, Innovation and Employment (2016).

⁵ 'Ethnic speakers of Pacific languages' refers to those who speak the Indigenous Pacific language of their self-identified ethnic group.



The United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) has classified several Pacific languages including Te Gagana Tokelau, Vagahau Niue, Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Āirani and Te Gana Tuvalu, as vulnerable or endangered. This means the language is generally only spoken by parents or grandparents, or by children but only in their home. Many of these populations are New Zealand-born, which correlates with language loss across all Pacific groups.

We're all in this together: Committing to thriving Pacific languages in Aotearoa

Language revitalisation and maintenance is complex and requires integrated, coherent, and multi-faceted approaches to ensure success. The saying *o le tele o sulu e maua ai figota* aptly describes how 'through collaboration we can overcome the most difficult challenges'.

Thriving Pacific languages in Pacific Aotearoa means Pacific languages are valued, used, and maintained in all areas of life in Aotearoa – from homes and communities to education, workplaces, and Government.

To make progress towards thriving Pacific languages in Pacific Aotearoa, this Strategy - and the associated actions and investment - will be informed by three key principles:

- **Te Tiriti o Waitangi:** this Strategy relates to supporting Indigenous Pacific cultures within Aotearoa, and in doing so recognises the status of Māori as tangata whenua and Te Reo Māori as the Indigenous language of Aotearoa. This acknowledges Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the deep connections between Māori and Pacific peoples.
- **Collaboration:** Pacific languages must be supported from a systems level right through to our families and communities. A consistent and coherent Government wide support to increase the numbers, use and value of Pacific language speakers is critical and timely.
- **Evidence:** our approach will ensure all decisions to support Pacific languages and associated funding, initiatives and activities will be informed and driven by research, data, and best practice.

We have a collective responsibility – an opportunity

We have a collective responsibility and opportunity to come together in ensuring Pacific languages, cultures and identities are thriving. Not only does this add value to the diverse fabric and vibrant cultures of a modern Aotearoa New Zealand, but it will also help strengthen Pacific peoples' contribution to the local economy while significant at present, remains fully unrealised⁶.

Aotearoa New Zealand is a Pacific nation and has an important role to play in supporting Pacific languages. This stems from a widely acknowledged special and historical relationship between Aotearoa and the nations of Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa.

- **Indigenous languages of the Realm of New Zealand:**

Through the constitutional status of Tokelau, Niue and the Cook Islands, their languages are Indigenous within the Realm of New Zealand⁷. In all three instances, the island populations retain New Zealand citizenship with full rights of access to New Zealand.

Indigenous Realm languages are protected by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2010). This guarantees the right to revitalise, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures (Article 13).

The populations of these groups in New Zealand significantly outnumbers the populations in their home countries. There are nearly six times the number of Tokelauans in New Zealand than in Tokelau, nearly 18 times the number of Niueans, and more than four times the number of Cook Islanders.

- **Samoa and Tonga:**

The Treaty of Friendship between Samoa and New Zealand is about sustaining friendship, confidence, and mutual endeavour to obtain for Samoans their full opportunities for social progress. Language is critical in achieving this.

There is a unique and historical relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and Tonga. Much like the Samoan population, the Tongan community make up a significant proportion of the Pacific population in Aotearoa New Zealand - and both have close to 50 percent of their overall populations residing in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Promoting Indigenous languages is a human right

Under international law (Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and Section 20 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act, New Zealand has a responsibility towards Pacific peoples and their languages as the rights of minority groups. It outlines that those who belong to a minority group in Aotearoa New Zealand shall not be denied the right to use their language.

Articles 29 and 30 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child emphasises the importance of a child's cultural development as important to wellbeing. These articles affirm that children should be free to use their own language and that the education of all children be respectful to the cultural identity, language and values of a child and their family.

It is important to keep in mind that in the context of climate change, many of those who are displaced may consider migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand, meaning our Pacific communities will continue to grow. We must be prepared to ensure, especially for those whose homelands are under threat, that Aotearoa New Zealand is a place for their languages, cultures, and identities to thrive.

⁶ The New Zealand Pacific Economy report. The Treasury (2018).

⁷ Tokelau is a non-self-governing territory of New Zealand; Niue became a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand in 1974; the Cook Islands became a self-governing state in free association with New Zealand in 1965.

Where we're headed: the future of Pacific languages in Aotearoa

As we look to the horizon for new ways of moving forward, we keep at the forefront of our mind and actions, the past and present. The Cook Islands proverb *'ākara ki mua, e 'ākara katoa ki muri* reminds us in looking and moving forward, we should also look to the past.

In 2018, following extensive engagements with over 2,500 Pacific peoples and communities across Aotearoa New Zealand, the Ministry for Pacific Peoples launched *Lalanga Fou*, which sets out the vision and journey ahead for Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand. The first goal of *Lalanga Fou* is to see thriving Pacific languages, cultures, and identities that are valued and recognised as assets in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Pacific Languages Strategy

Much like our ancestors, this Strategy (provided in full on page 22) takes a structured and considered approach to weaving and binding together the strands of Pacific languages work from throughout Pacific communities as well as across Government – the tighter the weave, the stronger the sennit. This will provide a clear path towards understanding and supporting Pacific wellbeing, and ensuring the benefits are shared throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

The components of the Pacific Languages Strategy include:

Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This Strategy is guided by the overall vision of thriving Pacific languages in Pacific Aotearoa⁸ and sets a 10-year plan for what we need to do to protect and promote Indigenous Pacific languages in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Key actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This Strategy prioritises three overall actions for increasing Pacific language use in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Language revitalisation areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• These three overall actions are drawn from the literature on language revitalisation which suggests that for languages to thrive, they must be strong in: <i>status, critical awareness, acquisition, corpus and use</i>^{9,10}.
Approach needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The nine Pacific languages supported by this Strategy have been categorised according to constitutional status, language vitality and demographic size.

Taken together, the components of this Strategy provide high-level strategic direction to coordinate language revitalisation and maintenance efforts across Government and key stakeholders – to meet the needs of Pacific communities. It also highlights the strengths and approaches required for each Pacific community in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This Strategy takes a strengths-based and holistic approach to Pacific languages as the cornerstone of Pacific wellbeing. While the focus is specifically on language, this Strategy recognises the indelible links between language, culture, and identity, and aims to amplify and enhance Indigenous Pacific languages, in recognition of the critical role that languages play in supporting Pacific wellbeing. In other words, while not explicitly stated in the title, this Strategy is a strategy for Pacific languages, cultures and identities.

⁸ Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou report. Ministry for Pacific Peoples (2018).

⁹ Te Oranga o te Reo Māori 2006 – The health of the Māori language in 2006. Te Puni Kōkiri (2008).

¹⁰ Language planning and policy: Factors that impact on successful language planning and policy. Tony Trinick, Stephen May & Ruth Lemon (2020).

All-of-Government Action Plan

This Action Plan will operationalise the Pacific Languages Strategy and will be developed during targeted consultation by the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and with key partner agencies such as the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

This action plan will detail:

- Opportunities and actions that Pacific communities wish to pursue so that their languages may thrive.
- Specific Government actions, investment, and future commitments for supporting thriving Pacific languages in Aotearoa.

Targeted consultation will seek input from Pacific communities on what actions are required to address the immediate needs for building language capability and capacity. Actions to support longer terms goals of language sustainability will also be identified. As each Pacific community has different needs and strengths relating to their languages, consultation feedback may also allow for the development of individual action plans for each language supported by this draft Strategy.

Targeted consultation will also seek input from Government agencies to confirm and outline specific Government actions, investment, and future commitments for responding to Pacific community needs and to support language revitalisation and retention.

Akin to the double hulled *vaka* that is ubiquitous across the Pacific, it is vital that communities and Government work together – one cannot work in isolation with the other. The success of the Strategy depends on partnership, to be articulated through this action plan.

The benefits of thriving Pacific languages

Wellbeing and cultural identity

The future wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand's Pacific peoples is linked to their ability to use, maintain, and sustain their Indigenous languages. Many Pacific peoples believe that fluency in their own Pacific language is important for achieving positive cultural and social outcomes.

- Pacific languages critically underpin and affirm cultural identity and sense of self. While a language is not indispensable to cultural or ethnic identity, language communicates the way in which people perceive, interact, and respond to the world around them.
- Pacific languages articulate Pacific culture. A shift to speaking only English results in the loss of cultural heritage, sense of self, values, knowledge, and traditions, as well as concepts and forms of expression.
- Pacific languages provide an entry point for understanding traditional and contemporary cultural worldviews. Capability in one or more Pacific languages increases understanding of cultural heritage, widens opportunities for self-expression and for mutual understanding and participation in community life.
- The intergenerational transmission of language, and therefore knowledge and culture, is also a key aspect of wellbeing within families. Pacific children and young people who are confident in their languages thrive in terms of their self-esteem, confidence, and identity. For older people, being able to hear and speak their own language with their family has a profound impact on their wellbeing, sense of purpose and role within the family^{11,12}.

¹¹ Māori and Pacific Peoples Co-creating research on loneliness and social isolation challenging Western perspectives in New Zealand – First presentation of findings. The Family Centre (2018).

¹² Ko e talanoa fekau'aki pea moe mo'ui kakato 'o e mātu'a Tonga nofo Nu'usila - The perspectives of wellbeing of Older Tongan people living in New Zealand: A qualitative study. Siaoosi Fasi'pule Mafi (2018).

Further evidence suggests that the health and wellbeing of a language is directly correlated to wellbeing and productivity¹³. Being strong in your home language is a protective factor that supports positive mental and physical health¹⁴.

Education, employment, health, and economy

The benefits of bilingualism¹⁵ and multilingualism¹⁶ are well-researched. Supporting the growth of Pacific languages will contribute to:

- Stronger educational equity and success for Pacific peoples (this is consistent with analysis of education outcomes in Māori-medium provision in Aotearoa New Zealand¹⁷);
- Positive socio-economic impacts through enhanced employment and earning opportunities for Pacific peoples;
- Positive mental and physical health and wellbeing for Pacific peoples; and
- Reduced cost in addressing impacts of low socio-economic factors.

Pacific communities are projected to make up 30 percent of the working population in Tāmaki Makaurau by 2026, and 11 percent of Aotearoa New Zealand’s total population by 2038.

The benefits of thriving Pacific languages are key drivers for strong wellbeing and productivity across Aotearoa New Zealand – and will resonate across all domains.¹⁸

¹³ To let die – the state of Samoan language in New Zealand. Galumalemana Alfred Hunkin (2012).

¹⁴ Defining positive mental wellbeing for New Zealand-born Cook Islands youth. Eliza Puna & Jemaima Tiatia-Seath (2017).

¹⁵ Research to understand the features of quality Pacific bilingual education: Review of best practices. Stephen May, Ministry of Education (2020).

¹⁶ Research on the social and economical value of multilingualism. Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages Aotearoa New Zealand (2012).

¹⁷ Bilingual/Immersion Education: Indicators of Good Practice. Stephen May, Richard Hill & Sarah Tiakiwai for the Ministry of Education (2004).

¹⁸ Languages in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Royal Society of New Zealand | Te Apārangi (2013).

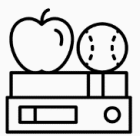


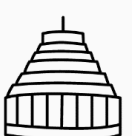




Pacific languages are crucial to a thriving Aotearoa New Zealand for everyone

Currently, the use of Pacific languages is largely confined to the domains of home and church.

As the Pacific population becomes more multi-ethnic, increasingly New-Zealand born, and as the intergenerational transmission of language slows, we know that our homes and churches are coming under continuous threat from the predominance of English.

For Pacific languages to thrive, their value, use and maintenance must be supported across all areas of life in Aotearoa New Zealand, not just in the home and churches.

In each of the domains shown on the next page, there are decisions, policies and levers that can be used to support thriving Pacific languages. As in the process of *filiga 'afa* this Strategy requires the intentional selection of the best strands – in this case decisions, policies and levers - to be woven together towards supporting thriving Pacific languages. This includes strengthening and weaving together existing strands, as well as creating new ones.

<p>Education</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal qualifications • New Zealand Curriculum • Language teaching capability and capacity • Pacific bilingual and immersion investment • Adult and community education • Traditional oral histories and cultures • Indigenous methodologies 	<p>Media, Creative Arts and Broadcasting</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ring-fenced Pacific funding • Pacific-focused programming • Pacific language programmes • Consistent Pacific language use • Communications and campaigns
<p>Churches</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Languages used in services and church activities • Language classes and seminars • Fostering language use in young children and youth • Guidance and information sharing on language issues • Development and use of language resources 	<p>Government</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legislation and regulation • Funding and resourcing • Investment in languages data and research • Local government strategy and resourcing • Awareness raising • All-of-Government culture and workforce
<p>Homes and families</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on language use, including passing on language/s • Decisions about learning language/s or learning in the language/s • Passing on family genealogy knowledge 	<p>Workplaces and businesses</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workplace policies on language use and translation • Recognition of employee language competencies • Signage and communications
<p>Public spaces</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent approach to linguistic landscaping • Signage and displays • Awareness campaigns and messaging • Public events 	<p>Community</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events • Pacific celebrations • Recreational and social activities

One size does not fit all

A tailored approach for different languages

This Strategy supports the nine Pacific languages¹⁹ that the Ministry for Pacific Peoples formally supports: Te Gagana Tokelau, Vagahau Niue, Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Āirani, Gagana Samoa, Lea faka-Tonga, Te Gana Tuvalu, Vosa Vakaviti, Fäeag Rotūam, and Te taetae ni Kiribati.

These Pacific language groups are diverse with different needs, strengths, and challenges. This Strategy, while guided by a broad vision and actions, takes a tailored approach to each community.

Se'i lua'i lou le 'ulu taumamao is a Samoan proverb that translates to 'pick the breadfruits from the far-off branches first'. In other words, tackle or address the most difficult tasks first. In this context, the languages that are at the most risk demands immediate and the most attention.

Based on the following criteria, the nine Pacific languages have been categorised in the following way:

- **Constitutional status and legal obligations:** Realm language status and other relevant constitutional or close relationships to Aotearoa New Zealand.
- **Language vitality:** overall percentage of speakers and young speakers²⁰, rates of language decline, levels of language endangerment^{21,22}, Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) score²³.
- **Demographics:** size of Aotearoa New Zealand population, proportion of population that resides in Aotearoa New Zealand, proportion of population that is New Zealand-born and proportion that is multi-ethnic (the latter two influence factors of language shift).

Language Group 1 - Urgent revitalisation: this group is characterised by high levels of endangerment, low numbers of speakers, low intergenerational transfer, and strong constitutional ties to Aotearoa New Zealand. This group is a high priority for revitalisation efforts.

Te Gagana Tokelau

Vagahau Niue

Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Āirani²⁴

Language Group 2 - Strengthening transmission & maintenance: this group is characterised by their large populations and relatively high number of speakers but also the sharp decline of total speakers and intergenerational transfer rates. This group is a high priority for retention and maintenance efforts.

Gagana Samoa

Lea faka-Tonga

Language Group 3 - Promoting & raising awareness: this group is characterised by small, emerging populations without a formal relationship with Aotearoa New Zealand. There are smaller numbers who are New Zealand-born and varying levels of endangerment.

Te Gana Tuvalu

Vosa Vakaviti

Fäeag Rotūam

Te taetae ni Kiribati

¹⁹ Action on other Pacific languages not included will be made through ongoing monitoring against the criteria outlined in this Strategy.

²⁰ As reported in 2018 census results by Stats NZ.

²¹ As classified in the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger.

²² Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger of Disappearing. Stephen Wurm (1996).

²³ Reversing language shift: theoretical and empirical foundations of assistance to threatened languages. Joshua Fishman (1991).

²⁴ Refers to the full range of dialects and languages spoken in the Cook Islands.

Achieving change through action

There is a Samoan saying, *e le tu faamauga seisi* which means ‘no person stands alone like a mountain, we must do things collectively. We are strong when we stand together and take others with us’ – we must work together in order to achieve change.

This Strategy includes three key actions for ensuring Pacific languages thrive in Aotearoa New Zealand. To operationalise these, an **All-of-Government Action Plan** will outline Pacific community needs and specific Government actions, investment, and future commitments for supporting thriving Pacific languages.

Key Action 1: Shift perspectives to ensure Indigenous Pacific languages are valued

This requires:

- raising the critical awareness of the value of Pacific languages;
- raising the status of Pacific languages; and
- a shared understanding of the links between Indigenous Pacific languages and Pacific wellbeing.

The social and economic benefits of thriving Pacific languages are critical to the wellbeing and productivity of all people in Aotearoa New Zealand – not just Pacific peoples. As a result of the dominance of monolingualism, English is favoured as the preferred path to success in Aotearoa New Zealand. This has influenced the language dynamics of Pacific communities and contributed to overall language loss. For Pacific languages to thrive, we need to shift the perspectives of both Pacific *and* non-Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. This shift is needed so the value of learning, maintaining, and using Pacific languages is widely understood.

There are many opportunities to shift perspectives...

A critical starting point is raising awareness of Aotearoa’s social, cultural, and historical relationship to the Pacific. There are many existing links between New Zealand and the Pacific, these can be strengthened through shared Pacific language use. The links between Pacific language use and Pacific wellbeing should also be more widely understood and valued.

Some ways to measure this shift...

- Increased numbers of Pacific and non-Pacific people understand the benefits of bilingualism, and understand that Pacific languages are the cornerstone of Pacific wellbeing
- Increased awareness of Aotearoa New Zealand’s responsibilities to Indigenous Pacific Realm languages
- The return on investment in Pacific languages is better understood by Government
- The status of Pacific languages is recognised in legislation and Government commitments
- More Aotearoa New Zealand-specific research on the benefits of Pacific languages is available and easily accessible
- Increased formal recognition of Pacific language competencies
- Overall increase in status of Pacific languages in Aotearoa New Zealand

Key Action 2: Increase opportunities and pathways for learning Indigenous Pacific languages

This will include:

- planning for quality pathways for language learning so people are supported to progress and continue learning; and
- developing more high-quality resources to support knowledge, skills and proficiency in Pacific languages.

The ripple effect of English-language assimilation has confined Pacific languages to the domains of home and church. The intergenerational transmission rates of many Pacific languages have declined drastically²⁵. Paired with an increasingly multi-ethnic, youthful Pacific population with lower attendance to traditional churches, more children, young people, and parents are speaking exclusively English in their homes.

As we work towards shifting perspectives to ensure Pacific languages are valued, this must be supported by actions to increase the opportunities and pathways for learning Pacific languages.

Increasing opportunities starts with building on previous successes...

Pacific communities have long worked to maintain Indigenous Pacific languages. For some of the priority languages considered in this Strategy, this work needs to be amplified rather than reinvented. For others, further support will benefit the implementation of opportunities and pathways for language learning.

Some ways to measure our progress...

- Increased number of high-quality formal and informal language classes available, including for intermediate and advanced speakers
- Clearly established formal pathways for language learning are increasingly available
- More people report being able to access quality Pacific language resources for learning and using their language
- Increased number of people learning Pacific languages and learning in Pacific languages
- Increased number of bilingual/immersion education options for languages that require maintenance and transmission
- Increased language learning community initiatives
- Overall increase in rates of intergenerational language transmission.

Key Action 3: Create environments for Indigenous Pacific languages to be used more often, and in more spaces

This will include:

- supporting, valuing and investing in quality Pacific language broadcasting; and
- encouraging and supporting the use of relevant Pacific languages in workplaces and education settings.

Pacific people regularly receive explicit and implicit messages that their languages are not useful or valued outside of their homes and churches. We need to take action to create opportunities for Pacific languages to be used more often and in more spaces.

Shifting perspectives and increasing opportunities and pathways for language learning creates environments for Indigenous Pacific language use...

Creating environments for Pacific languages means establishing and holding space for Pacific cultures within mainstream structures. For this key action, a committed and collaborative approach is especially important – as articulated in the *filiga 'afa* proverb, we will need to look to the horizon for new ways of moving forward whilst keeping at the forefront of our minds and actions the past and present.

²⁵ The intergenerational transmission of Pacific languages in Aotearoa NZ. Judy Taligalu McFall-McCaffery & John McCaffery (2017).

How we will know we're making progress...

- Increased Pacific language use in traditional and social media programming.
- More Pacific people, including young people, report feeling comfortable speaking Pacific languages outside of the home and the church
- More Government agencies consistently translate key information into the Realm languages, Gagana Samoa and Lea faka-Tonga
- More people report being able to access important public information in Pacific languages
- Stronger presence of linguistic landscaping in public domains
- More local community initiatives that create opportunities for speaking and sharing the language are underway
- Overall increase in number of Pacific language speakers

Communities must self-determine what success and thriving Pacific languages looks like to them

A key aspect of this Strategy is that it must centre Pacific peoples. Part of this means Pacific families and communities must be empowered to self-determine what success and thriving Pacific languages, cultures and identities and success looks like to them. They themselves will know the kinds of behaviours and shifts that are making a meaningful difference for their families and communities. These will be captured in the All-of-Government Action Plan and will guide any measures or targets for this work.

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Pacific community language profiles

While the strategic actions describe some of the high-level differences in approach for each of the nine Pacific languages, the following Pacific community language profiles go into more depth on the current state, barriers, and opportunities for each language. This information has been developed from a series of engagements with key language champions and community groups, and will form the basis of the Pacific Community Language actions for inclusion in the All-of-Government Action Plan.

Barriers to language use, retention and maintenance

During our engagements, Pacific communities highlighted the following barriers:

- Low perceived value of Pacific languages
- Prioritisation of English
- The perception of English as a successor language
- Engaging and supporting young people to lead in language teaching and learning
- Connecting younger generations with community elders
- Community efforts are often reactive, rather than proactive
- Fatigue and exhaustion
- Lack of shared and communal spaces
- Lower rates of intergenerational transmission
- Low quality or inaccessible language resources
- Lack of formal educational options
- Complex language dynamics (i.e. multiple dialects)

Language Group 1 - Urgent revitalisation

Te Gagana Tokelau

Tokelau remains a dependent territory of Aotearoa New Zealand. Tokelauans are New Zealand citizens, with 85% of the population living here in Aotearoa New Zealand. The future of te Gagana Tokelau therefore hinges on how well it is revitalised and maintained in Aotearoa New Zealand.

According to UNESCO, the language is classified as *severely endangered*. There are few opportunities to learn the language in the community or through formal education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 23% of the 8,767 Tokelauans in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has dropped by 14% since 2006.
- 13% of those under the age of 15 speak the language.
- 79% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 65% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 85% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community see an opportunity to build the critical awareness of speakers so they know the benefits of young people speaking both English and te Gagana Tokelau - and will therefore be encouraged to share the language. Another opportunity to explore is how grandparents might be able to play a role in early childhood education as language experts. There is also the desire to see te Gagana Tokelau as an accredited NCEA subject.

Vagahau Niue

Niue is a self-governing nation that is part of the Realm of Aotearoa New Zealand. Its citizens are New Zealand citizens, with 95% of Niueans living here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

UNESCO has classified Vagahau Niue as *definitely endangered* - and of all the Pacific languages, Vagahau Niue has some of the lowest rates of language retention for those under 15. There are very few options to learn the language formally or in community settings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 12% of the 30,867 Niueans in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has dropped by 11% since 2006.
- 7% of those under the age of 15 speak the language.
- 83% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 71% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 95% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community see an opportunity for more funding to support the running of language classes. While there is demand for learning the language, there is also a lack of funding. The community want to prioritise building on resources we already have, developing further digital and print resources and targeting young people.

Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Āirani

The Cook Islands are a self-governing nation that is part of the Realm of Aotearoa New Zealand. Its citizens are New Zealand citizens, with 82% of Cook Islanders living here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Tourism rates between Aotearoa New Zealand and the Cook Islands are high - making the use of English on the main island of Rarotonga very common.

According to UNESCO, the language is classified as *vulnerable*. There are very few opportunities to learn the language in the community or through formal education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 9% of the 80,532 Cook Islanders in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This number has dropped by 7% since 2006.
- 7% of those under the age of 15 speak the language.
- 83% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 57% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 82% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community see opportunities to better support the role of grandparents in passing on the language to the younger generation – any action must be focused on young people embracing the language. They identify the need for context-specific resources that explore not only language but the histories, cultures and ecosystems of the different Cook Islands.

Some Cook Islands youth have expressed interest in language classes tailored specifically for New Zealand-born Cook Islanders that combine elements of identity, language, and culture. Communities want to see language learning options within a family context, not just taught in a traditional classroom.

Language Group 2 - Strengthen maintenance and transmission

Gagana Samoa

Although Samoa is an independent nation, it has a special relationship with New Zealand through the Treaty of Friendship 1962. Samoans are one of the fastest growing populations in Aotearoa New Zealand and represent the largest population of Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand (47.9% at the 2018 census, an increase of 26.8%). There are more Samoans living in the diaspora than in Samoa, and the future of Gagana Samoa depends on how well it is maintained in Aotearoa New Zealand.

While Gagana Samoa is the third most spoken language in Aotearoa New Zealand, following English and Te Reo Māori, its use is declining rapidly.

- 50% of the 182,721 Samoans in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has dropped by 9% reduction since 2006.
- 44% of Samoans born in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- 53% of Samoans born in Samoa speak the language, a decline of 37% since 2006.
- 20% of those under the age of 15 speak the language, a decline of 5% since 2006.
- 67% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 42% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 48% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community believe that viewing Gagana Samoa as a cultural resource and an asset is important for the language to thrive – it is important that it is respected for its wider social, economic, cultural and cognitive value. Legislating Gagana Samoa as an official community language would send a clear message that the language has value in Aotearoa. The Samoan community see the opportunity to normalise speaking Gagana Samoa in as many areas of life as possible in Aotearoa New Zealand is integral to ensuring the maintenance of the language.

Lea faka-Tonga

While there is no constitutional relationship between New Zealand and Tonga, there exists an international relationship between friendly neighbouring sovereign states. It is estimated that 42% of all Tongans are New Zealand residents, making the Tongan community the second largest Pacific ethnic group in Aotearoa New Zealand (21.6% of the Pacific population in New Zealand).

Since 2013, the Tongan population has increased by 36.6%. Despite the highest population percentage increase over the last five years, their language retention has continued to decline over the last 10 years. The Tongan community is experiencing one of the steepest declines across all Pacific languages in Aotearoa New Zealand.

- 40% of the 82,389 Tongans in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has dropped by 16% since 2006.
- 40% of Tongans born in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- 57% of Tongans born in Tonga speak the language.
- 21% of those under the age of 15 speak the language, a decline of 9% since 2006.
- 64% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 36% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 45% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community sees the opportunity to raise awareness around the value of Lea faka-Tonga in the hopes it will influence the use and intergenerational transmission of language.

Language Group 3 - Promote and raise awareness

Te Gana Tuvalu

Te gana Tuvalu is categorised as *definitely endangered* and while the retention rate of the language is higher than most other Pacific groups (especially among young people at 25%), it is also seen one of the sharpest declines since the 2006 census. Like other smaller groups without an official relationship with Aotearoa New Zealand, there is very little support from Government.

- 48% of the 4,653 Tuvaluans in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This dropped by 14% since 2006.
- 25% of those under the age of 15 speak the language.
- 33% of New Zealand-born Tuvaluans can speak the language.
- 64% of overseas born Tuvaluans can speak the language.
- 54% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 28% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 31% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community see an opportunity to develop more quality language resources, as well as sourcing and refining existing language resources that fit the context of Aotearoa. More funding could support the provision of high-quality language classes and opportunities like cultural and language camps for young people.

Vosa Vakaviti

The Fijian community is the fifth largest Pacific group in Aotearoa New Zealand, with close to 20,000 Fijian New Zealanders. As a proportion of the New Zealand Fijian population, relatively few can speak the language, but they have had one of the highest maintenance rates since 2006.

Just over 1 in 10 New Zealand-born Fijians can speak their language, compared to the 9 in 10 Fijians born in Fiji (now living in Aotearoa New Zealand) who can speak their language. Of all Pacific ethnic groups, only a small proportion of the total Fijian population resides in Aotearoa New Zealand (2%).

- 24% of the 19,722 Fijians in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has only dropped by 3% since 2006.
- 9% of those under the age of 15 speak the language.
- 11% of New Zealand-born Fijians and 87% of overseas born Fijians can speak the language.
- 41% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 45% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 2% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community see an opportunity to draw on respected Fijian leaders and community members to spread consistent messaging about the value of the language. This could be done through broadcasting, media or social media.

Developing better resources and clear messaging about the importance of speaking your language for the social and economic benefits would help communities to make informed decisions about learning, using and maintaining the language. The community identified several community-driven initiatives such as church-based language and cultural activities, establishing play groups and sharing with the wider Fijian community in Aotearoa as key opportunities.

Fäeag Rotuam

The Rotuman population is the smallest of the Pacific groups identified as requiring revitalisation and retention support through the Pacific Languages Strategy.

Rotuma is a Fijian dependency made up of Rotuma Island and nearby islets. It's the only language group where the number of speakers has *grown* since the 2006 census. The first Rotuma language week was celebrated in 2018.

However, it has been identified as *vulnerable* on UNESCO's list of endangered languages.

- 34% of the 981 Rotumans in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has increased by 5% since 2006.
- There are only approximately 2,000 speakers of the language living on the islands of Rotuma. All other speakers are migrants or children of migrants who have left the islands for various reasons.
- 49% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 65% identify with multiple ethnicities.

The community see an opportunity to support initiatives such as culture and language camps that focus on passing on the language and culture to younger generations. Some see an opportunity to organise groups of young people to go back to Rotuma to be immersed in the language, cultural customs and knowledge. The community would also like to see more year-long consistent messaging and broadcasting that promotes Fäeag Rotuam.

Te taetae ni Kiribati

The Kiribati population is another smaller Pacific ethnic group in Aotearoa New Zealand with a total population of 3,225. The largest groups of i-Kiribati live in Auckland and Wellington. Aotearoa New Zealand has 75 places annually for migrants from Kiribati, however a growing proportion of the population are now born in Aotearoa New Zealand. Kiribati is one of the only small Pacific groups that currently have the option of attending a bilingual education unit in Auckland which was established in 2019.

- 50% of the 3,225 i-Kiribati in Aotearoa New Zealand speak the language.
- This has dropped by 6% reduction since 2006.
- 24% of those under the age of 15 speak the language.
- 20% of New Zealand-born Kiribati can speak the language.
- 77% of overseas born Kiribati can speak the language.
- 41% are born in Aotearoa New Zealand and 25% identify with multiple ethnicities.
- 3% of the population reside in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The community see an opportunity to develop employment options that support those strong in the language to make a living, while having time to pass on and teach the language. More funding could support cultural and language camps for young people, and contribute to the development of high-quality language classes in the community and education system.

Links with other key Pacific strategies

Pacific languages, cultures and identities will thrive when Government agencies, partner organisations and others are working closely with each other, and with Pacific families and community groups. Accordingly, this Strategy aligns with and supports a number of key Pacific strategies across Government. How this will work in practice will be articulated in the All-of-Government Action Plan. Some examples of how this Strategy aligns with other key Pacific strategies are summarised below.

Ministry of Education	<p><i>Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift 1- Work reciprocally to respond to the unmet needs of Pacific learners and families • Key action to develop a policy on Pacific bilingual and immersion education in early learning and schools
New Zealand Qualifications Authority	<p><i>Takiala Pasifika 2020-2023 Action Plan for Pacific Learner Success</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Pacific language teachers • Quality Pacific language provision and assessment
Ministry for Culture and Heritage	<p>Pacific Media Network and Pacific languages broadcasting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting Pacific language programmes
Education Review Office	<p><i>Pacific Strategy – Driving Success for Pacific Learners 2019-2022</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pacific learners are confident in their languages, cultures and identities
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade	<i>Pacific Reset</i>

Implementation, monitoring and review

The implementation of this Strategy will be supported by an All-of-Government Action Plan. A proposed three-year timeframe for this action plan allows innovative ideas and programmes to be tested and built upon. Incremental progress will be measured and monitored as below:

The Pacific Languages Strategy									
Three-year Action Plan			Three-year Action Plan			Three-year Action Plan			2030-31
2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	Review Strategy to inform next iteration
Complete and roll-out Strategy & Action plan Establish baseline measures	Midpoint check	Review and evaluate Plan for next iteration	Build on previous plan Check progress against baseline	Midpoint check	Review and evaluate Plan for next iteration	Continue building on impact and successes	Midpoint check Strategy maturity reached	Check progress against baseline Planning begins for next Strategy	

Draft Pacific Languages Strategy

Vision: Thriving Pacific Languages in Aotearoa

Key actions:		1. Shift perspectives to ensure Pacific language use is valued		2. Increase opportunities and pathways for learning Pacific languages		3. Create environments for Pacific languages to be used more often, and in more spaces	
Language revitalisation areas:		Status	Critical awareness	Acquisition	Corpus	Use	
		Raise the critical awareness of the value of Pacific languages Build a shared understanding of the links between Indigenous Pacific languages and Pacific wellbeing		Develop quality language learning pathways so people are supported to progress and continue learning Develop more high-quality resources to support knowledge, skills, and proficiency in Pacific languages		Support, value and invest in quality Pacific language broadcasting Encourage and support the use of relevant Pacific languages in workplaces and education settings	
Language groups	Urgent revitalisation of Te Gagana Tokelau, Vagahau Niue and Te Reo Māori Kuki 'Āirani involves:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raising awareness of Indigenous languages of the Realm of Aotearoa New Zealand Raising the status of Pacific languages Working towards official community language status for Indigenous Pacific Realm languages 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding opportunities for language teaching, learning, assessment, and qualifications in formal education settings Supporting and strengthening intergenerational transmission 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building visibility of Indigenous Realm languages in the linguistic landscape of Aotearoa New Zealand Setting an expectation that key public information from Government agencies is translated in these languages 	
	Strengthening maintenance and transmission of Gagana Samoa and Lea faka-Tonga involves:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Growing critical awareness of the social and economic benefits of competency in Gagana Samoa and Lea faka-Tonga – and support these to be recognised 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in the expansion of quality bilingual and immersion education Supporting and strengthening intergenerational transmission 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting an expectation that key public information from Government agencies is translated in these languages Building visibility in the linguistic landscape where there are concentrated populations in Aotearoa New Zealand 	
	Promoting and raising awareness of Te Gana Tuvalu, Vosa Vakaviti, Fāeag Rotūam and Te taetae ni Kiribati involves:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking activities that promote and raise awareness of smaller language groups 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting community initiatives for language learning 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting local community initiatives that raise the profile of these languages and enable these groups to share their languages and culture 	
To be developed during consultation:		All-of-Government Action Plan (3-years), informed by Pacific community consultation feedback					
Potential measures for the Pacific Languages Strategy and Action Plan (communities will help determine what this will look for them):		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased numbers of Pacific and non-Pacific people understand the benefits of bilingualism, and understand that Pacific languages are the cornerstone of Pacific wellbeing Increased awareness of Aotearoa New Zealand's responsibilities to Indigenous Pacific Realm languages The return on investment in Pacific languages is better understood by Government The status of Pacific languages is recognised in legislation and Government commitments More Aotearoa New Zealand-specific research on the benefits of Pacific languages is available and easily accessible Increased formal recognition of Pacific language competencies Overall increase in status of Pacific languages in Aotearoa New Zealand 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of high-quality formal and informal language classes available, including for intermediate and advanced speakers Clearly established formal pathways for language learning are increasingly available More people report being able to access quality Pacific language resources for learning and using their language Increased number of people learning Pacific languages and learning in Pacific languages Increased number of bilingual/immersion education options for languages that require maintenance and transmission Increased language learning community initiatives Overall increase in rates of intergenerational language transmission 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased Pacific language use in traditional and social media programming More Pacific people, including young people, report feeling comfortable speaking Pacific languages outside of the home and the church More Government agencies consistently translate key information into the Realm languages, Gagana Samoa and Lea faka-Tonga More people report being able to access important public information in Pacific languages Stronger presence of linguistic landscaping in public domains More local community initiatives that create opportunities for speaking and sharing the language are underway Overall increase in number of Pacific language speakers 	

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