

Consultation to develop a

Long-term Insights Briefing (LTIB)

Improving Pacific data equity:
Opportunities to enhance the future of Pacific wellbeing



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

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Our role as the Ministry for Pacific Peoples

Introduction

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples (**the Ministry**) is the voice of Pacific peoples in government – and our voice comes from our Pacific communities to focus on areas that will make the greatest difference. The Ministry’s role includes support to improve Pacific outcomes and working alongside our communities to achieve their vision of a thriving, resilient and prosperous Pacific Aotearoa. We do this by harnessing relationships, knowledge and expertise to better connect Pacific people and government.

We do not work alone. Our extensive networks and relationships with Pacific communities across Aotearoa New Zealand¹ are critical for sharing valuable ideas and insights so the Ministry can meaningfully influence and lead on public policy decisions and the design, and delivery, of programmes and services for Pacific peoples. This also involves working with Pacific communities to facilitate an understanding of Pacific values, strengths and conceptions of wellbeing.

What is a Long-term Insights Briefing?

Under the Public Service Act 2020 ([Schedule 6, Clauses 8 and 9](#)), government departments are required to develop and publish a Long-term Insights Briefing (**LTIB**) at least once every three years. This is the first time that departments are producing LTIBs.

LTIBs are intended to help promote long-term thinking so that the public service is better placed to respond to future change and can deliver enduring benefits for people in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The purpose of a LTIB is to share:

- information about medium and long-term trends, risks and opportunities that affect or may affect Aotearoa New Zealand
- information and impartial analysis, including policy options for responding to these matters.

LTIBs are not government policy which means they are developed independent of ministers. This allows the LTIBs to share the views of New Zealanders without being impacted by the politics of the day.

LTIBs will be available to the public to be used as a resource and evidence base to inform decision-making. More information on the LTIBs can be found here:

[Long-term Insights Briefings | Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet \(DPMC\)](#)

The Ministry’s strategic vision guides our work

The aspirations of Pacific peoples are captured in the [Pacific Aotearoa Lalanga Fou](#) report. This report reflects a year-long talanoa process with approximately 2,500 Pacific people across Aotearoa New Zealand. As a result of these engagements, the following Lalanga Fou vision statement was established, which will help to guide the development of our LTIB:

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

The work we do together with Pacific Aotearoa is both critical for Pacific peoples and an investment in the future wellbeing and prosperity of Aotearoa New Zealand.

¹ The terms Aotearoa and New Zealand are both used in this document.

Purpose of this consultation document

Under legislation we are required to undertake two rounds of public consultation to ensure our final LTIB reflects public views – the first on the proposed topic, and the second on the detailed LTIB content.

This document is for our first round of public consultation and covers our proposed LTIB topic. It outlines why we have chosen the proposed LTIB topic and provides you with key information to help with your feedback on several key questions.

The LTIB will help us better understand what matters to Pacific peoples about the future, and the impact of future change to help guide and influence positive and meaningful policy for better Pacific wellbeing outcomes.

How to give feedback:

We are seeking written and verbal feedback on our proposed LTIB topic. This is the first step of a two-step approach to develop our LTIB. We welcome you to provide feedback on any and all sections in this document – all questions are optional and you are welcome to stop at any point.

The closing date for feedback is 5:00pm, Friday 28 January 2022.

Please send us your feedback in one of the following ways:

- complete the feedback form available on our [website](#) that gives you an opportunity to have your say directly and confidentially
- If you prefer to email or post your feedback, please email us at: ltib@mpp.govt.nz
- or post to:

**Policy Branch
Ministry for Pacific Peoples
PO BOX 833
Wellington 6140
New Zealand**

If you would like to be involved in stakeholder engagements, e.g., workshops, one-to-one discussions, please reach out to us at: ltib@mpp.govt.nz

You may want to include evidence to support your views like references to research, facts and figures, or relevant examples from people's lived experience.

You are not required to provide any personal information to complete this feedback process.

Any information that you do provide will be collected confidentially and will not identify you personally. We will only use the information to inform the development of the LTIB. The Ministry adheres to the Aotearoa New Zealand Government-endorsed Data Protection and Use Policy (DPUP) to ensure data privacy and safety.

Questions?

If you have any questions or concerns about this document or the privacy of your information, or you are experiencing technical difficulties, please contact us at ltib@mpp.govt.nz for support.

Setting the scene

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand – where we are today

“Pacific peoples” is a collective term widely used to refer to the diverse ethnic and cultural groups with shared ancestry and heritage links to their lands in the Pacific region. Those who identify as Pacific peoples also share identifiable cultural commonalities like language. Many can trace their connections to one another across the Pacific region and over many generations.

There are more than 381,000 people who identify as Pacific according to the 2018 Census. However, Pacific peoples is an umbrella term that covers more than 17 culturally distinct Pacific ethnic groups² under the Pacific classification category of the New Zealand Standard Classification of Ethnicity³.

The five largest Pacific ethnic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand (in order of population size) are Samoan (47.9%), Tongan (21.6%), Cook Islands Māori (21.1%), Niuean (8.1%), and Fijian (5.2%).

Pacific peoples are integral to the richness of Aotearoa New Zealand and have strong cultural, economic and political ties with Aotearoa New Zealand. The number of Pacific peoples living in New Zealand grew from 2,159 to 65,694 between 1945 and 1976 as many Pacific peoples migrated to take up employment opportunities.

Special relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and Pacific countries

The Realm of Aotearoa New Zealand

The Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau are part of the Realm⁴ of Aotearoa New Zealand. These countries share a close constitutional relationship – people born in these three Pacific countries are New Zealand citizens with full rights of access. The populations of these groups in Aotearoa New Zealand significantly outnumber the populations in their home countries. There are nearly six times the number of Tokelauans in Aotearoa 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

In 1962, the New Zealand Government signed a Treaty of Friendship with Samoa to recognise the special relationship and formal ties between the two countries. There is also a unique and historical relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand and Tonga. The Tonga community make up a significant proportion of the Pacific population, with close to 50 percent of their overall population residing in Aotearoa New Zealand.

² These include: Cook Islands Māori, Fijian, Hawaiian, i-Kiribati, Indigenous Australian, Kiribati, Nauruan, Niuean, Ni Vanuatu, Papua New Guinean, Pitcairn Islander, Rotuman, Samoan, Solomon Islander, Tahitian, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Tuvaluan.

³ The New Zealand Standard Classification of Ethnicity is a hierarchical classification of four levels. Level 1 of the classification has six categories, level 2 has 21 categories, level 3 has 36 categories and level 4 has 233 categories. Refer: http://aria.stats.govt.nz/aria/?_ga=2.52479275.260375903.16133602401602960030.1612382308&_gac=1.148014789.1613360261.CjwKCAiA5aOBBhA4EiwAo0_AnLjKwpr01p9M4TXIyWGnheWO7r6VcQzADe33v2GCbu4IP1ntjuA56xoCuYIQAvD_BwE#ClassificationView:uri=http://stats.govt.nz/cms/ClassificationVersion/I36xYpbxsRh7IW1p.

⁴ The Queen is Head of State of the Realm of New Zealand, which is made up of New Zealand, the self-governing States of Cook Islands and Niue, Tokelau and the Ross Dependency. New Zealand is the main link for these four countries.

Current snapshot of Aotearoa New Zealand's Pacific population⁵

- Pacific peoples make up about eight percent of the Aotearoa New Zealand population, or 381,642 people. Medium-term projections from Stats NZ estimate the Pacific population will grow by 30% by 2038 to more than half a million.⁶
- 66% of Pacific people are born in Aotearoa New Zealand, with a third born overseas.
- 46% of Pacific people born overseas have been living in Aotearoa New Zealand for more than 20 years.
- Approximately 41% of Pacific people identify with more than one ethnic group.
- A growing number of Pacific people born in Aotearoa New Zealand also identify as Māori (currently nine percent). Whilst other ethnic combinations have increased by 0.1 or 0.2%, those who identify as Pacific and Māori has increased by 1.3%.
- The Pacific population is comparatively youthful, with a median age of 23.4 years compared to 37.4 years for the general population. About a third (34%) of the total Pacific population is under 15 years old.
- Most Pacific people live in Auckland [243,966], followed by Wellington [42,774], Waikato [20,742] and Canterbury [18,927].

⁵ Note this present-day snapshot of the Pacific peoples population in Aotearoa New Zealand has been obtained from 2018 Census data. All other sources have been cited accordingly in this document.

⁶ Refer: [Subnational ethnic population projections: 2013\(base\)–2038 update | Stats NZ](#)

What topic has MPP chosen to explore and why?

The Ministry is proposing to develop a LTIB on the following topic:

Improving Pacific data equity: Opportunities to enhance the future of Pacific wellbeing

Defining data

Data is different types of information that we all generate and use every day. Whether it's checking the bus schedule, taking a survey on your shopping experiences or signing in to check your emails – data is the information that we share, collect, collate, and disseminate in our everyday lives.

StatsNZ defines data as any type of information that is collected in order to be categorised, analysed, and/or used to help decision-making.

Across government, we use and rely on data to identify and assess need, and to inform government decision-making about how to best respond to current and future needs on behalf of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is fundamental that the work across government is informed by accurate, relevant and meaningful data.

Defining Pacific data

Building on the StatsNZ definition of data, "Pacific data" is a specific type of information. It is information either produced by, or about, Pacific peoples and includes unique Pacific ethnic and cultural information. As such, Pacific data is multi-faceted, complex, dynamic, evolving and exists in and throughout socio-cultural contexts.

Some ways that we can think about Pacific data are set out below⁷:

1. Pacific data is a living taonga of Pacific peoples, which reflects and derives from Pacific history, present realities, and future aspirations;
2. Pacific data considers and values the history of Pacific information, knowledge and data. It should be conceptualised and understood in relation to Pacific perspectives, and within Pacific frameworks.
3. Pacific data refers to data produced by, or that is about, Pacific people and the environments Pacific peoples have relationships with, including:
 - Traditional cultural information, oral literature, ancestral knowledge, Pacific epistemology, language, tribal histories and stories, data from Pacific entities.
 - Information collected by or from organisations, businesses and government agencies, such as commercial data, demographics, legal, health and social data. Uses for this data can include for research, or comparative and descriptive purposes.
 - Data about Pacific resources and environment including information about land history, migration stories and voyages across the diaspora.
4. Pacific data includes digital spaces and platforms that are about people and resources. Pacific data is knowledge and information that influences Pacific lives at both the micro-individualistic to macros-collective levels.

⁷ As an initial starting point, we will be leveraging off the definitions of Pacific data developed by the Pacific Data Sovereignty Network (PDSN). The PDSN are a non-government organisation who were established in 2019 in response to the 2018 Census findings where only 65 percent of Pacific peoples responded in the online census form. Refer: <https://www.moanaresearch.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PDS-consultation-document.pdf>

The Ministry would like your feedback on:

- **What do you think about the proposed definition for Pacific data?**
- **What does Pacific data mean to you?**

Defining Pacific data equity

'Equity' is a principle based on ideals of fairness, justice, and impartiality. Equity is recognising that because we don't all *start* from the same place, we must acknowledge then correct any unfairness or imbalance, often by providing targeted support. Equity is not the same as equality. Equality usually means having or receiving the same/equal opportunities or treatment as others.

Example: Life expectancy for Pacific peoples is approximately six years lower than the general population⁸. Drivers of lower life expectancy among Pacific peoples include low incomes, poor or inadequate housing, and lifestyle such as poor diet, minimal exercise and smoking. The principle of equity leads to efforts to 'close the gap' in life expectancy through health or socio-economic improvements. Equity focused policy responses to lower life expectancy may include education, and direct supports such as housing, welfare, or targeted programmes or initiatives.

'Data equity' is about eliminating unfairness and bias that may be present in how data is collected, analysed, interpreted, and presented. **'Pacific data equity'** then is about ensuring that Pacific data collection, analysis, interpretation and presentation is free from unfairness or bias, because if it is not, this results in false information and narratives about Pacific peoples, Pacific culture and worldviews.

Pacific data equity – why should we care?

Pacific data equity is of benefit to everyone, not just Pacific people. It ensures that Pacific data and data methods are free from bias, fairly portrays Pacific, and is an accurate reflection of both reality and lived experience. It encourages us to look at problems differently and helps us to challenge assumptions or unconscious bias, by centring us in a Pacific strengths-based framework.

A Pacific data equity approach requires careful design and application that both understands and incorporates Pacific ways of knowing and being while also being aware of possible biases and subjectivity that might otherwise influence data methods. Often it will require direct involvement of Pacific expertise to ensure data is properly contextualised.

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are too often portrayed through a deficit or blaming framework. Official statistics highlight the persistent inequities that Pacific peoples experience across key areas such as housing, health, and income, but this can undervalue Pacific efforts including emerging Pacific innovations aimed at addressing these inequities, or overlook Pacific lived experiences and cultural aspects involved.

Pacific data equity concerns also arise because a standardised approach for Pacific data does not exist, which for example, could control ways of collecting and organising Pacific data. This lack of a consistent approach can result in serious data quality issues that at worst mean the data is not a fair or accurate reflection of reality, and so it cannot be meaningfully relied upon.

⁸ The Health and Quality Safety Commission. (2021). *Bula Sautu - A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19*. Available at: [Bula Sautu – A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/bula-sautu-a-window-on-quality-2021-pacific-health-in-the-year-of-covid-19) | [He mata kounga 2021: Hauora Pasifika i te tau COVID-19 \(hqsc.govt.nz\)](https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/he-mata-kounga-2021-hauora-pasifika-i-te-tau-covid-19)

Even if unintentional, many data practices have equity implications for Pacific peoples.

Example: While Pacific participation in the Census is generally low, the digitalisation of the 2018 Census resulted in much lower response rates for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa. It overlooked that for Pacific peoples, trust in government is an issue, alongside digital exclusion barriers such as lack of digital devices and connectivity to the internet. This resulted in only a 65% Pacific response rate. This means that we must either rely on data from the 2013 Census because it has higher response rates but is clearly outdated, or we rely on 2018 data which is simply not representative enough of Pacific peoples but is more closely representative of current experiences.

A shared understanding of Pacific data equity doesn't currently exist. Addressing this may help to inform and strengthen the validity of policy and investment decisions made now, for the future. Pacific data equity may help guide us in how to look at and understand Pacific people and problems in more appropriate ways and to respond accordingly.

The Ministry would like your feedback on:

- **What do you think about the proposed definition for Pacific data equity?**
- **What does Pacific data equity mean to you?**

Pacific data equity – understanding community aspirations

Pacific data equity has not yet been explored at the government level. As stewards of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa, we aim to ensure the government generates accurate, relevant, and representative data to support better decisions that affect Pacific peoples, now and for the future.

In the context of our LTIB, we aim to better understand:

- how the New Zealand government has been, and is mandated to, collect and analyse Pacific data (what have been the key developments over time);
- how data policies and methods might impact Pacific peoples' wellbeing; and
- future opportunities and risks in relation to Pacific data equity, and what this means for the future wellbeing of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.

While the LTIB needs to focus on the future, we know that the future is shaped by our past and present. Current community aspirations for now and the future, informed by the past, are therefore vitally important.

The Ministry would like your feedback on:

- **Does what you hear about Pacific data/statistics in Aotearoa reflect your community?**
- **How could Pacific data better support Pacific communities?**

Future opportunities and challenges

Pacific data equity – how is this connected to the future of Pacific wellbeing?

Budget 21 included \$6.6 million to support the establishment of an [All-of-Government Pacific Wellbeing Strategy](#) (the Strategy), which aims to improve Pacific wellbeing⁹ in the long-term. The Strategy will drive improved wellbeing outcomes by strengthening strategic leadership across government, measuring changes in Pacific wellbeing over time, and ensuring appropriate investment that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of Pacific communities.

The Strategy contains a suite of focus areas which include:

- a. partnership and governance (to strengthen collective action and community leadership);
- b. capability (to lift cultural competency and responsiveness);
- c. performance and improvement (to measure and track the impact of investment); and
- d. a set of Pacific values and principles as the foundations for the strategy (and to guide and underpin government activity).

However, not all aspects of Pacific wellbeing are currently captured in routine administrative or national datasets, and we are aware of Pacific wellbeing data gaps that urgently need to be addressed. Some of this will happen via the Strategy. The Treasury also acknowledges that data gaps exist which pose challenges for a comprehensive measurement of Pacific wellbeing in Aotearoa New Zealand.¹⁰ The Pacific data equity insights captured as part of this LTIB will help us to identify further areas that need to be modified to ensure accurate, rigorous and real time Pacific wellbeing data.

Growing a culture of data equity is important so that we will improve data definitions, methods, and data access across the system. It is key to better design, delivery, monitoring and reporting of results for our community and most importantly, to help achieve improved Pacific wellbeing outcomes.

Work to build the capability of government will also empower government agencies to better understand how to ensure they collect, manage and use the right kind of data in an equitable way - and in partnership with Pacific communities. Current and future governance arrangements will ensure that the above focus areas capture appropriate data to inform and drive future decision-making that will improve outcomes for Pacific peoples. Pacific data equity is a key enabler for Pacific wellbeing.

⁹ For the Strategy to be most effective, it must have a Pacific lens applied to it and therefore it must progress towards a vision of wellbeing that is grounded in Pacific values, principles, and worldviews. To acknowledge the complexity and diversity within Pacific Aotearoa, we must ensure that outcomes are equitable and enduring, and inclusive and responsive to diverse Pacific communities across physical, spiritual, cultural and environmental dimensions. A significant body of knowledge informs our current understanding of Pacific wellbeing and we are mindful that no single static definition of wellbeing can represent the complexity and diversity within Pacific Aotearoa. Work in this area will continue as part of Strategy development.

¹⁰ The Treasury (2018). *A Pacific Perspective on the Living Standards Framework and Wellbeing*. Available at: <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/publications/dp/dp-18-09-html>.

The Ministry would like your feedback on:

- **What do you think are the greatest opportunities or risks for Pacific data equity?**
- **Do you agree that Pacific data equity is a key enabler for Pacific wellbeing? Why?**
- **What are your aspirations for Pacific data now and in the future?**

Next Steps

We really appreciate you taking the time to share your views. Consultation on the Ministry's LTIB opened on 29 November 2021 and will close at 5:00pm on 28 January 2022. The feedback we receive as part of this first consultation will be used to inform what issues we prioritise and to develop the content of the draft LTIB.

The draft briefing will be made available in the second round of consultation to provide feedback – this will take place in early 2022. Having incorporated public feedback from the first round of consultation, the second consultation round will present draft LTIB content.

After feedback is received on the draft LTIB content, a final LTIB will be completed then tabled in Parliament and is subject to a select committee review.

The current due date for our final LTIB will be mid-late 2022.

- **What other issues or topics would you like the Ministry to explore in future LTIBs?**
- **Do you have any further comments that you would like to share?**