



Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Long-Term Insights Briefing

Report of the Social Services and Community
Committee

August 2023

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Angie Warren-Clark
Chairperson

Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Long-Term Insights Briefing

Recommendation

The Social Services and Community Committee has considered a long-term insights briefing from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples—*Improving Pacific Data Equity: Opportunities to Enhance the Future of Pacific Wellbeing*—and recommends that the House take note of its report.

About long-term insights briefings

The Public Service Act 2020 requires chief executives of government departments to develop and publish long-term insights briefings (LTIB) at least once every three years. The briefings must be produced independently of the relevant Minister, and the chief executive must consult the public on both the subject matter of the report and its draft version.

The purpose of the briefings is to inform the public about medium- and long-term trends, and future risks and opportunities facing New Zealand. Each briefing should provide information, impartial analysis, and potential policy responses to challenges identified in the briefing.

We heard from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples—Te Manatū mō Ngā Iwi ō te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa about its first LTIB, entitled, *Improving Pacific Data Equity: Opportunities to Enhance the Future of Pacific Wellbeing*.

About the ministry's long-term insights briefing

The ministry's LTIB explores Pacific data inequity in New Zealand. It looks at how to improve data systems and processes so that data more accurately represents Pacific perspectives and values. The LTIB states that:

Pacific data equity is about ensuring that the definition of Pacific data and its design, collection, analysis, interpretation, and use—including the presentation of information and narratives about Pacific peoples—represents Pacific voices and is free from bias.¹

The ministry has found that Pacific worldviews are not consistently taken into account across government data systems. This risks misrepresenting the issues that affect Pacific people, leading decision-makers to misidentify potential solutions. The ministry said that if Pacific people's views were better incorporated into the Government's data ecosystem, then the Government would be better informed to make policy and funding decisions that serve Pacific people.

¹ [Long-term Insights Briefing, Improving Pacific Data Equity | Ministry for Pacific Peoples, p 6.](#)

The LTIB identifies three shifts that government data systems will need to make to improve Pacific data equity. They include:

- partnering with Pacific peoples and communities
- monitoring and improving Pacific data
- growing Pacific expertise.

Overall, the ministry emphasises that, to be successful in improving Pacific wellbeing outcomes, it is essential that Pacific voices inform the data and decision-making processes that affect them. It said it hoped its LTIB would be a catalyst for nationwide discussion and talanoa (conversation) on these issues.

The Kakala framework

In its LTIB, the ministry examines the current data system using the Kakala framework, a Tongan research framework. Kakala refers to the Tongan practice of weaving a garland using flowers and leaves. The LTIB outlines six phases of the kakala process and how they relate to data production:

- Teu—thinking about the purpose of the kakala and who it is being created for. This represents the data design phase.
- Toli—searching for, selecting, and gathering the flowers for the kakala. This represents the collection or classification of data.
- Tui—weaving or making the kakala. This represents the analysis of data.
- Luva—respectfully giving the kakala to the people it was intended for. This represents the publication of data.
- Mālie—a Tongan expression that refers to showing one’s appreciation towards something, and the complexities and interplay between the component pieces. This represents the evaluation or review of the whole process.
- Māfana—a continual process of reflection. This represents the process of societal transformation, policy changes, or partnerships with Pacific communities as a result of data.

The ministry explained that both mālie and māfana need to be present at every stage of the kakala process.

Incorporating Pacific worldviews in the data ecosystem

Data on volunteering and unpaid work

The 2018 Census asked whether people had participated in unpaid work—such as housework, looking after a child, or voluntary work—during the month prior. Only 65 percent of Pacific peoples aged 15 years and over responded yes to this question, compared to 80 percent of non-Pacific people. The ministry said that terms such as “unpaid work” or “volunteering” are not Pacific concepts and are not compatible with Pacific cultural obligations, notions of service, or duty to care. The ministry emphasised that many Pacific people would not explain or interpret their contributions using such words. Consequently, the census data does not capture Pacific peoples’ full contribution in these areas.

In 2021, the ministry published its own research report on the value of unpaid work and volunteering by Pacific peoples in New Zealand, using a Pacific cultural lens and research framework.² This research found that around 56 percent of the total hours Pacific people spend on unpaid work and volunteering are not captured in official statistics.

The ministry said that it is important to recognise the economic and social value of Pacific peoples' unpaid work and volunteering contributions. It gave the example of Pacific initiatives during the response and recovery following Cyclone Gabrielle in early 2023. It highlighted, for example, that Kings House Church in Napier set up an evacuation centre where more than 300 Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme workers stayed for up to 10 weeks following the cyclone.

Data on housing and owner-occupation

We noted that the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's LTIB found that the number of Pacific people living in homes they own has fallen from 51 percent in 1986 to 31 percent in 2018.³ In comparison, 79 percent of Pākehā owned their homes in 1986, declining to 56 percent in 2018. We asked the ministry how Pacific peoples' involvement in data design and research on home ownership trends could help to interpret these results and identify solutions.

The ministry said that applying a Pacific cultural lens to analyse the causes behind these trends would help "get to the heart and the essence of the issue". It said that Pacific people have a collective way of living, and often combine incomes for house deposits or other housing payments. The ministry added that official definitions of "homelessness" include living in an overcrowded home, something that is more common for Pacific people. It said this way of living also came with a lot of advantages: "there's this family collectiveness that you really enjoy". The ministry said that, overall, to understand Pacific housing outcomes, it was necessary to understand Pacific worldviews.

Sharing and presenting Pacific data

Collaboration and data sharing between government agencies

We noted that achieving Pacific data equity would require an all-of-government effort. The ministry said that it has to improve its own capability to support other government agencies but noted that other agencies would also have to strengthen their Pacific workforces. It said that some agencies, such as Immigration New Zealand, now have quite large Pacific workforces. The ministry said that it was working with agencies, such as the Social Wellbeing Agency—Toi Hau Tāngata, on partnerships and other agreements regarding data sharing and production. In its LTIB, the ministry stated that an all-of-government Pacific data framework could be a potential solution to address inequities within the data system.

² [Pacific Economy Research Report on Unpaid Work and Volunteering in Aotearoa | Ministry for Pacific Peoples.](#)

³ [Long-term Insights Briefing | Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.](#)

Access to data for Pacific peoples and organisations

We asked the ministry how much demand there is from Pacific communities and organisations for greater access to government data. The ministry said that data sharing “goes two ways”. The ministry recognises that it needs to ensure Pacific people are given access to data that is presented in a way that is meaningful and accessible for them. In its LTIB, it acknowledged that this would also include work to build Pacific peoples’ data literacy. At the same time, the ministry said that many Pacific organisations hold valuable knowledge and data. It said that partnerships should be established so that community-sourced data can also be shared with decision-makers.

The New Zealand Census

We asked the ministry what involvement it has had with Statistics New Zealand—Tatauranga Aotearoa (Stats NZ) to evaluate past censuses and the future of the New Zealand Census. The ministry said that, following the 2018 Census, it had provided suggestions regarding improvements to encourage more Pacific people to complete the census. This included recommendations for Stats NZ to partner with Pacific organisations, churches, and people at a grassroots level. It said that, leading up to the 2023 Census, Stats NZ increased its Pacific workforce and had Pacific leadership throughout its data design process. The ministry added that it had shared information about the 2023 Census online, including through online fono (meeting or council), to encourage participation.

We noted that there have been suggestions that Stats NZ should review its data collection and publications, including considering whether the traditional census should continue.⁴ The ministry said that this could be a concern. It noted that a substantial amount of work is needed to improve Pacific data equity and ensure that Pacific people are accurately represented in any official data collection methods.

Our conclusion

We thank the Ministry for Pacific Peoples for its long-term insights briefing. We think that data equity is an important and interesting topic and recognise that data is a powerful tool for sense-making, storytelling, and decision making. We think that it is important to ensure Pacific voices are valued, respected, and recognised in the data system.

We understand that in its development of the LTIB, the ministry used a talanoa ‘a kāinga⁵ approach to engage and consult with 124 people, including 38 public servants from 15 different agencies. We recognise that the ministry engaged well with the public and drew from many sources and experiences to inform its briefing. We appreciate the care and consideration the ministry has put in to ensure that its LTIB is presented in a way that will be meaningful, accessible, and useful both across government agencies and for Pacific peoples.

⁴ [Will 2023 be the last? The Government’s statistician talks about the future of the census | NZ Herald.](#)

⁵ The talanoa ‘a kāinga approach derives from the Tongan practice of laying out the mat (fala) for the families (kāinga) to talk (talanoa). It is intended to create space for participants to openly share their views and experiences.

We believe that LTIBs offer meaningful opportunities for us to explore issues in more depth and think about the future. We look forward to seeing how this LTIB will influence government data systems and decision making in future.

We encourage others to read the ministry's LTIB.

Appendix

Committee procedure

We met between 19 July and 16 August 2023 to consider this briefing. We heard evidence from the Ministry for Pacific Peoples—Te Manatū mō Ngā Iwi o te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa.

Committee members

Angie Warren-Clark (Chairperson)
Karen Chhour
Dr Liz Craig
Dr Emily Henderson
Anahila Kanongata'a
Ricardo Menéndez March
Terisa Ngobi
Maureen Pugh
Hon Louise Upston

Vanushi Walters and Teanau Tuiono participated in our consideration of this briefing.

Evidence received

[The long-term insights briefing is available here.](#) You can watch our hearing related to this briefing using the link below:

- [Hearing of evidence 19 July 2023](#) (from 19:58).