

Briefing to the Incoming Minister for Pacific Peoples

April 2026

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Executive Summary

Tēnā koe, Tālofa lava, Mālo ni, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Kia orānā, Mālō e lelei, Tālofa, Noa'ia, Ni sa bula vinaka, Mauri, Halo olgeta, Halo olketa, and warm Pacific greetings.

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples welcomes you to the Pacific Peoples portfolio. We are your principal advisor on policies and interventions aimed at improving outcomes for Pacific peoples in New Zealand. We work across government to coordinate and leverage investment in Pacific priorities. We draw on data and evidence and strong partnerships with Pacific communities to provide high quality insights and advice.

The purpose of this briefing is to provide you with:

- the overarching context for Pacific communities in New Zealand;
- a summary of the strategic priorities in the Delivering for Pacific Communities Strategy 2025 – 2028;
- an overview of the Ministry's programmes and key targets for 2025/26, including our cross-portfolio priorities and potential opportunities; and
- your portfolio responsibilities and how the Ministry will support you in these.

We look forward to working closely with you, understanding your vision and priorities for Pacific peoples, and delivering on these to improve outcomes for Pacific communities and New Zealand.

The Strategic Context

Pacific peoples in New Zealand are a source of talent, expertise, and innovation

Pacific peoples make valuable contributions to our economy and society. In 2026, Pacific peoples make up approximately 9% of the total population, or 497,600 people. It is estimated that this number will increase to 684,600 by 2043 (11.2% of total population). While two-thirds of Pacific peoples are New Zealand-born, New Zealand retains close and enduring relationships with many Pacific nations, underpinned by historical ties, trade, and regional cooperation. Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau peoples hold New Zealand citizenship as part of the Realm of New Zealand, and the Treaty of Friendship with Samoa reflects enduring diplomatic and cultural ties.

Successive waves of Pacific migration have played a pivotal role in shaping New Zealand's demographic landscape, resulting in a vibrant and diverse Pacific population that has undergone substantial growth in recent decades. Auckland is home to 62% of Pacific peoples and is a key economic and cultural hub and is home to some of the largest Pacific populations in the world, with the domestic Tokelau, Niue, and Cook Islands populations exceeding those in their respective Pacific islands.

Pacific peoples make a significant contribution to New Zealand's economy and society

Pacific peoples generate around \$8 billion in GDP each year.¹ Pacific workers also contribute strongly through earnings and spending. Total income earned by Pacific peoples is estimated at \$6.6 billion, with household consumption contributing a further \$10.4 billion to GDP in annual expenditure. This reflects the growing role of Pacific communities in driving economic activity across the country.

Pacific entrepreneurship is expanding rapidly. As of 2023, there were more than 5,200 Pacific-owned businesses in New Zealand. These businesses generate billions in revenue and are an increasingly important part of the national economy. These Pacific-owned businesses generated \$1.798 billion in sales in Auckland, and \$1.327 billion across the rest of the country in 2023.

Beyond direct economic measures, Pacific peoples contribute through community leadership, cultural capability, and unpaid voluntary work. Pacific religious organisations, an organising pillar of Pacific communities, hold over \$500 million in New Zealand assets.

Pacific communities continue to face persistent economic and social inequities

Pacific peoples experience higher rates of unemployment, lower median incomes, and greater exposure to insecure or lower-paid work compared with the total population. These disparities are shaped by structural factors, including occupational concentration in lower-wage sectors, barriers to education and training, and broader socioeconomic disadvantage. Pacific households are more likely to experience cost pressures and overcrowded housing, which can compound financial stress and limit opportunities for economic mobility.

Pacific women face a significant gender pay gap, earning less on average than both Pacific men and non-Pacific women. They are more likely to be employed in lower-paid, part-time, or care-related roles, and face additional barriers to career progression and leadership opportunities. These inequities intersect with ethnicity and gender, contributing to wider income disparities and reduced lifetime earnings. Addressing these gaps is critical to improving outcomes for Pacific communities and supporting inclusive economic growth.

¹ This figure was produced from Treasury's 2018 report 'The New Zealand Pacific Economy'. It is the only report of its kind and has not since been repeated. The Ministry is looking into commissioning additional research to gather recent data on Pacific peoples' economic contribution.

Pacific communities have unique demographic characteristics

The term 'Pacific peoples' comprise many Pacific ethnic groups with diverse identities, cultures, and languages. For the Ministry, it is defined by the Stats NZ ethnic group classification and includes Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islands Māori, Niuean, Fijian, Tokelauan, and Other Pacific Peoples.²

To support strategic planning and prioritisation, understanding the unique population characteristics of Pacific peoples is critical. These include:

Rapid growth

- Between 2018 and 2023, New Zealand's Pacific population increased by 14%, compared to a 6% increase in the total population over the same period.
- Between 2013 and 2023, the percentage of the New Zealand population who identify with at least one Pacific ethnic group increased from 7.8% to 8.9%.

Youthful age structure

- In 2023, the median age of the Pacific population was 24.9 years, compared to the median age of the total population being 38.1 years.
- In 2023, Pacific peoples accounted for 26% of Auckland's population under 15 years.³

Diversity of ethnicity, culture, and language

- Nearly 39% of Pacific peoples speak more than one language, with Samoan being the third most widely spoken language in New Zealand after English and te reo Māori.
- According to 2023 Census usually resident population, around 43% of Pacific peoples identify with more than one ethnicity, including nearly two-thirds (62%) of Pacific peoples under the age of 15 years.
- More than one in five of Pacific peoples identify as both Māori and Pacific (21%). For Pacific peoples under the age of 15 years, this number is more than one in three (34%).
- Approximately 16% of the Pacific population have a disability, and around 4.3% of Pacific peoples in New Zealand identify as Rainbow+.

Majority born in New Zealand

- Two-thirds (67%) of Pacific peoples are born in New Zealand, including 91% of Pacific peoples younger than 15 years.

Geographic concentration

- Pacific peoples are more likely than the total population to live in large urban areas. In 2023, around 85% of Pacific peoples lived in large urban areas, including the Auckland region (62%), Wellington region (11%), Waikato region (6%), and Canterbury region (5%)
- Pacific populations are growing in regional council areas such as Bay of Plenty (3%), Manawatū-Whanganui (3%), Hawke's Bay (2%), Northland (2%), and Otago (2%).

² Other Pacific Peoples include indigenous Australian, Hawaiian, Kiribati, Nauruan, Papua New Guinean, Pitcairn Islander, Rotuman, Tahitian, Solomon Islanders, Tuvaluan, Ni Vanuatu and Pacific Peoples not elsewhere classified.

³ [New research captures snapshot of New Zealand's Pacific economy - OurAuckland](#)

Delivering for Pacific Communities Strategy: 2025 - 2028

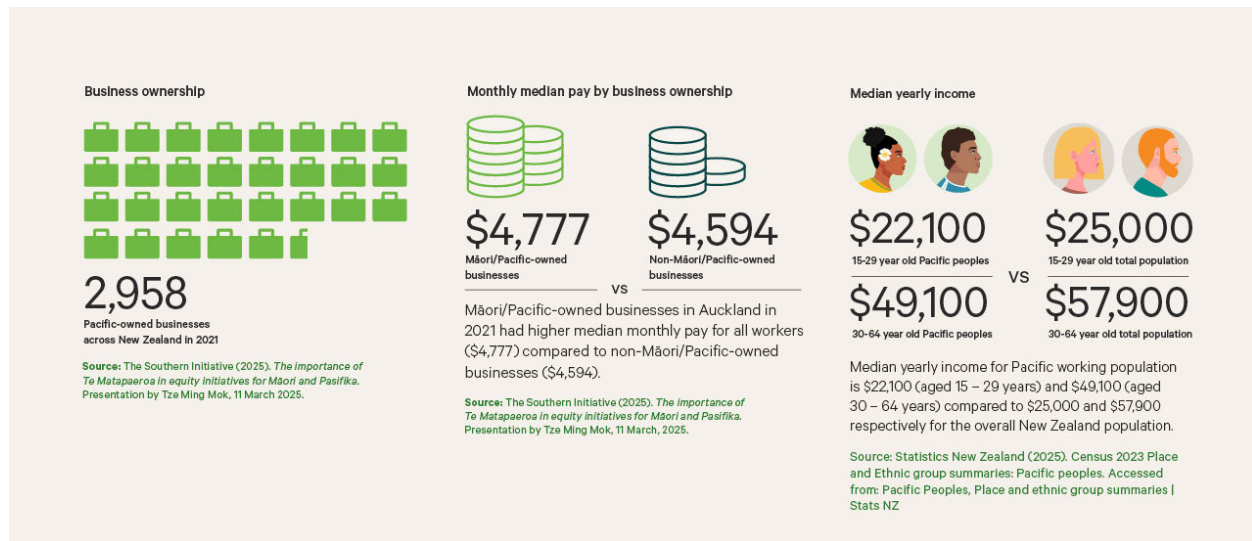
[Delivering for Pacific Communities](#) is the Government’s three-year strategy to strengthen the health, resilience, and prosperity of Pacific peoples and communities. The strategy is a key mechanism for delivering on wider government priorities, including in national efforts to improve economic growth, housing, health, education and public safety.

The five priorities, and the Ministry actions to advance the priorities, are outlined below. More detailed information on Ministry funded programmes and initiatives is provided in Appendix 1.

Economic Growth: Lift Pacific economic contributions and strengthen the Pacific business sector to increase revenue, increase scale, and create jobs.

- ✓ Ministry programme: Pacific Business Village initiative funds Pacific Business Trust to support long-term economic development and sustained growth for Pacific businesses.
- ✓ Ministry programme: Game On Initiative developed with industry and Pacific partners to create clearer pathways for Pacific youth into New Zealand’s gaming sector.

Pacific peoples make a significant contribution to the New Zealand economy as employers, employees, entrepreneurs, and leaders in the voluntary and charity sectors. As the Pacific population grows, they will form an increasingly large share of the future workforce and business community. By investing in resources, training, and mentorship, we can help sole traders and businesses to scale, innovate, and create jobs—strengthening our economy’s competitive edge.

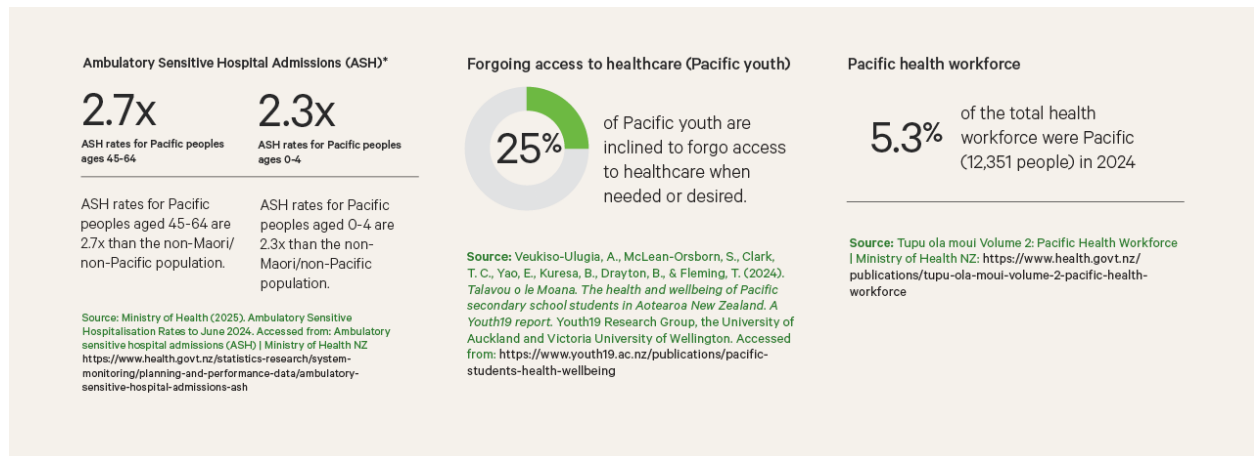


Health: Support access to quality health services and promote the health and wellbeing of Pacific families and communities.

- ✓ Ministry programme: The Pacific Healthy Homes Initiative supports better health outcomes for target Pacific groups s9(2)(f)(iv)

Strong social and cultural connections are protective factors for Pacific health, and Pacific communities and providers have shown resilience and innovation despite long-standing inequities in healthcare access and outcomes. Addressing broader determinants of health, such as housing and education, is essential to improving outcomes.

More work is needed to address unmet healthcare needs, particularly in primary care, and to support Pacific-led health promotion. Rural, Rainbow+, and disabled Pacific communities report access issues, often due to cost or concerns about discrimination. The health workforce also needs support to build cultural competence and better reflect the Pacific population.



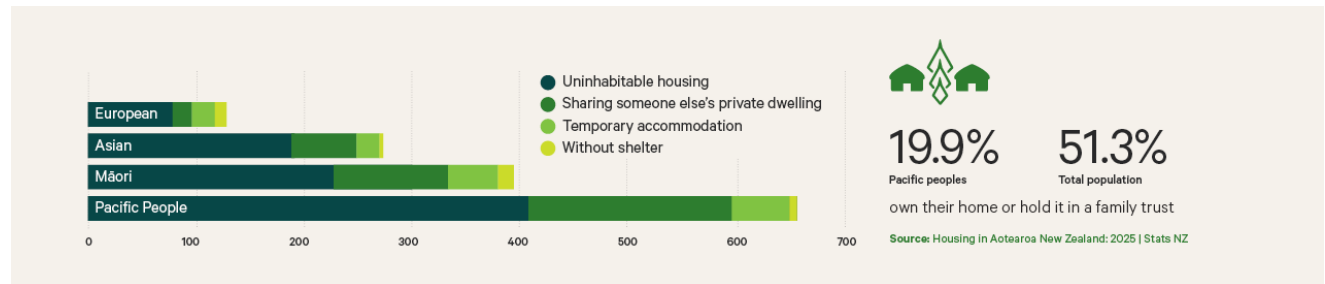
Housing: Support the supply of affordable, fit-for-purpose homes for Pacific families.

- ✓ Ministry programme: Our Whare Our Fale is a community-led housing initiative supporting affordable home ownership for Pacific families in Eastern Porirua.
- ✓ Ministry programme: The Pacific Building Affordable Homes initiative increases affordable housing by building affordable homes and incentivising innovative, fit-for-purpose building of new homes (funding for the initiative concluded in 2024/25).
- ✓ Ministry programme: The Financial Capability Programme delivers financial literacy training and mentorship to Pacific families looking to purchase a home.

Investment in Pacific home ownership provides intergenerational security and housing stability, enabling stronger ties to communities, greater access to local services, increased social cohesion, and higher civic participation. Evidence shows that home ownership improves mental health and wellbeing and reduces crime – lowering social costs and strengthening community safety. Housing stability is also linked to positive education and employment outcomes.

Pacific peoples continue to have the lowest home ownership rates of any population group, highlighting the need for targeted support. Investing in affordable, fit-for-purpose housing is a short-term cost with long-term benefits.

Figure 1: Severe housing deprivation by ethnicity and housing deprivation type, rate per 10,000 usual residents 2023



Education: Boost skills and employment opportunities and invest in Pacific languages, cultures, and identities to improve outcomes and grow the talent New Zealand needs.

- ✓ Ministry programme: Tupu Aotearoa supports Pacific peoples into work, study or training (programme transferring to Ministry for Social Development from 2026/27).
- ✓ Ministry programme: Toloa scholarships and community organisation funding support Pacific young people into Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- ✓ Ministry programme: Investing in Pacific languages to increase learning and use of Pacific languages and promoting wider health and education outcomes.

Pacific communities consistently emphasise the importance of education in achieving their aspirations. NCEA Level 2 attainment for Pacific students finishing Year 12 increased from 43.4% in 2011 to 59.6% in 2024, while the achievement gap with all students narrowed from 16.4% to 9.5%.⁴

Despite this progress, Pacific learners and families still report barriers to quality education and ongoing inequities in outcomes. Evidence shows that education that sustains Pacific cultures and languages supports better outcomes. Expanding bilingual education in primary schools could lift Pacific achievement and positively impact New Zealand’s GDP.⁵ Similarly, boosting employment outcomes requires supporting Pacific peoples to gain skills for changing industries and enabling Pacific businesses—who are more likely to employ and pay Pacific workers well—to grow their capability.⁶

⁴ Note this data is listed as being from 2009 and 2022 by the Ministry of Education, while the figures represent the achievement of the cohorts who entered Year 11 in 2009 and 2022, the data shows whether or not those cohorts achieved NCEA two years later (in 2011 and 2024). We have used 2011 and 2024 for clarity.

⁵ educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/pacific/research-to-understand-the-features-of-quality-pacific-bilingual-education

⁶ The Southern Initiative, Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment & the Auckland Co-design Lab (no date). Pacific Peoples' Workforce Challenge: Accelerating the advancement of Pacific people in the workforce identified. Accessed from: Pacific+Peoples+Workforce+Challenge.pd

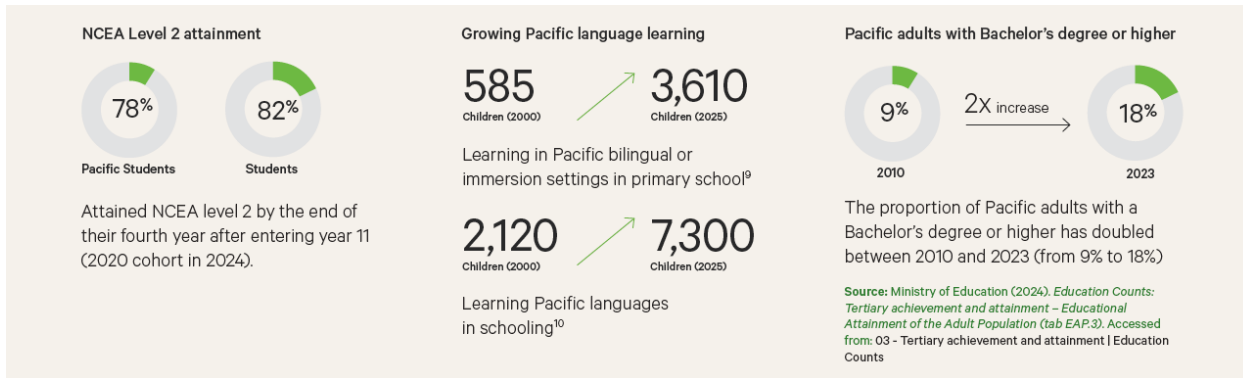
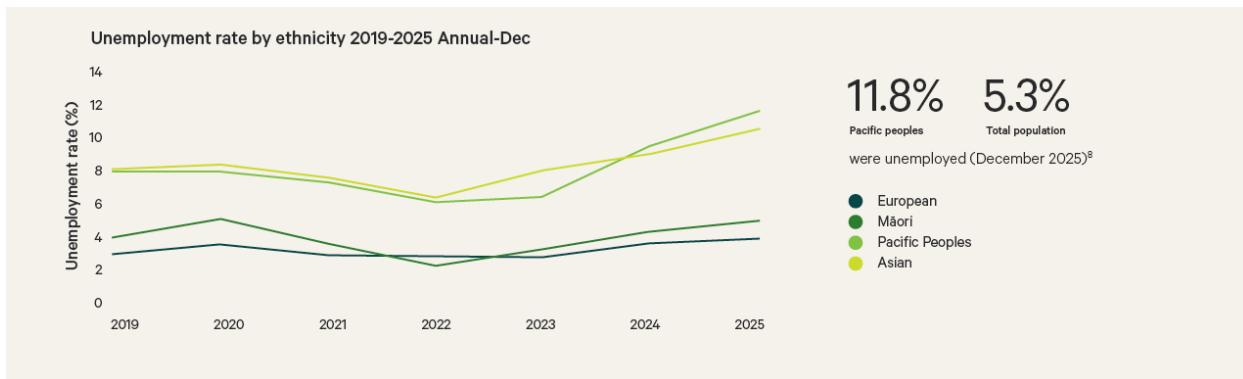


Figure 2: Unemployment rates by ethnicity 2019 -2025 (annual December rates)



Law and Order: Ensure Pacific communities are safe and supported by investing in culturally responsive justice initiatives.

- Ministry programme: The Pacific Wardens funding supports more Pacific wardens in priority communities and further training opportunities to enhance effectiveness of this initiative.

While Pacific peoples have lower re-offending rates than the general population, which have declined over the past decade, research still highlights negative interactions with Police and isolating court experiences.⁷ Cultural stigma discourages victims and offenders from seeking support. Greater investment is needed in culturally responsive, community-led approaches focused on prevention and rehabilitation. Cultural engagement can act as a protective factor against risky behaviours such as alcohol abuse and is linked to lower rates of repeat offending.



⁷ Pacific Peoples and the Criminal Justice System in Aotearoa New Zealand | Borrin Foundation

Current work programme

The Ministry is responsible for appropriations in Vote Pacific Peoples

For the 2025/26 financial year, the total Vote is approximately \$52.8 million, comprising departmental and non-departmental expenditure.

- Departmental expenditure (approximately \$28 million) funds the Ministry's core functions, including policy advice, partnerships and engagement, and programme design and oversight to maintain strong links between the Crown and Pacific communities.
- Non-departmental programme funding (approximately \$24 million) supports delivery across key priority areas, including:
 - **Housing** initiatives (approximately \$10 million), including programmes such as Our Where Our Fare and Pacific housing supply initiatives
 - **Education, employment, and skills** programmes (approximately \$6 million), including Tupu Aotearoa and Toloa scholarships
 - **Economic growth and business** support (approximately \$6 million), including services delivered through the Pacific Business Trust
 - **Community, language, and leadership** initiatives (approximately \$1 million), including Pacific languages, Pacific media and community programmes
- The Ministry is also responsible for capital expenditure of \$127,000, which supports business-as-usual information technology replacement.

All programmes work towards one or more of the Delivering for Pacific Community priorities.

Appendix 1 provides further detail on the Ministry's eleven core initiatives for 2025/26.

The Ministry has undertaken a phased fiscal consolidation programme

Over the past two years, the Ministry has implemented a phased fiscal consolidation programme in response to government-wide savings requirements and a constrained operating environment. This has involved structural changes, reprioritisation of funding, and a shift toward a more efficient, system-focused operating model that targets resources to core functions and areas of highest impact.

In Budget 2024, the Ministry delivered organisational savings of approximately \$5–6.4 million per annum (around 7.5% of baseline funding), primarily through structural changes and workforce reductions, including a decrease from 156 to 99 FTE roles. These changes enabled the Ministry to meet savings targets while largely maintaining programme delivery in the short term.

In Budget 2025, further consolidation decisions reduced Vote Pacific Peoples by \$9 million per annum, driven by the scaling down of Tupu Aotearoa by \$5.5 million (from \$10.75 million to \$5.25 million) and the closure of the Tauola Business Fund (\$3.5 million). In addition, funding for the Dawn Raids work programme will cease in out-years, reducing expenditure by \$420,000 per annum from 2027/28.

Across both budgets, these changes represent a cumulative reduction of approximately \$26 million, equivalent to around 31% of the Ministry's baseline funding. This reflects a deliberate

shift toward streamlined funding, greater alignment with other agencies (particularly in employment and training), and a stronger focus on value for money.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Artificial intelligence

In mid- 2025 the Ministry began integrating artificial intelligence (AI) into its work to improve efficiencies, and strengthen data, insights, and service delivery for Pacific communities.

The Ministry is focused on ensuring Pacific perspectives are reflected in the use and governance of AI. This includes working across government and with communities to promote equitable access to digital opportunities, address potential bias in data systems, and look at ways to ensure AI-enabled services are culturally appropriate and inclusive.

This approach positions the Ministry to both leverage AI to improve outcomes and to provide system leadership on how new technologies can be applied in ways that benefit Pacific peoples and uphold trust, integrity, and fairness.

Cross-portfolio priorities

Alongside programmes led by the Ministry, the Pacific Peoples portfolio has strong connections with your Arts, Culture, and Heritage and Media and Communications portfolio, particularly in relation to Pacific language, the Dawn Raids work programme and cultural media content and the joint Trust Deed you now hold with National Pacific Media Trust. The Ministry's delivery of the Pacific Wardens Initiative also has crossover with your law-and-order portfolio.

Your Pacific Peoples portfolio responsibilities are also likely to involve cross-portfolio work with:

- Minister of Foreign Affairs, particularly relating to Pacific missions, bilateral engagements with Pacific leaders visiting New Zealand and initiatives that jointly support Pacific communities both in New Zealand and the region.
- Minister of Social Development, particularly around support for Pacific employment and delivery of Tupu Aotearoa programme, which will be transferred from Vote Pacific Peoples to Social Development for 2026/27.

Ministry officials engage regularly with other key agencies. Some specific examples of our work include:

- Supporting Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) to address immigration issues, including the 2026 Review of the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) scheme, visa pathway changes, and changes to the migrant settlement support system.
- Collaborating with the Ministry for Culture and Heritage to support the sustainability and modernisation of Pacific media.
- Building sector capability by delivering Yavu Pacific engagement training and Kapasa Pacific policy analysis training to a wide range of staff across central and local government.
- Partnering with Stats NZ to strengthen the quality of Pacific data across government, including participation in the All-of-Government Pacific Data Advisory Group.

Formal partnerships with other agencies

The Ministry holds several Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with other Crown entities. MOU enable more focused and deliberate partnerships, identifying mutual goals and responsibilities to support shared outcomes. These currently include:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOU): collaboration to deliver better outcomes for Pacific peoples within New Zealand and in the Pacific region.
- Stats New Zealand (MOU): commitment to long-term work programme to improve Pacific data quality and equity.
- Creative New Zealand (MOU): to co-deliver initiatives supporting Pacific creatives, publishing literary works in Pacific languages and creating opportunities for emerging creatives.
- World Crafts Council (MOU): focusing on expanding creative and economic opportunities for Pacific artists, this partnership supports them to gain greater access to international training, markets, and networks.

Potential Opportunities

The evolving demographics of Pacific populations present both opportunities and challenges. Pacific populations are youthful, largely urban, and New Zealand born. 91% of Pacific children under 15 years are now born in New Zealand and the population continues to experience high rates of growth. Strategic planning is essential to ensure inclusive and sustainable development.

New Zealand's future economic prosperity is heavily dependent on the prosperity of Pacific young people. While Pacific peoples make up 9% of the current workforce, this is expected to increase to 11% by 2043. This growth will continue, meaning that the state of Pacific employment is increasingly critical to the economic prosperity and productivity of New Zealand.

The current geopolitical climate and associated fuel crisis is already increasing strain on Pacific communities, having an immediate impact on household costs and mobility. Over time, high fuel costs could compound existing rates of unemployment through direct job losses in fuel-intensive industries such as agriculture and construction, increased inflation requiring tighter monetary policy, and reduced consumer spending impacting retail, hospitality and other sectors.

Early intervention and support for Pacific young people is aligned with the Government's focus on social investment and will likely yield the biggest returns on investment.

Education and Skills

- **Education and skills provide an opportunity to ensure Pacific young people are on a positive trajectory, increasing long-term economic contributions and reducing social spending.**

In 2025, there were 24,636 Pacific students enrolled in secondary schools. More than half of these students (53%) attend just 25 schools, with all but one located in Auckland. The significant concentration of Pacific learners during their critical years of schooling creates a clear opportunity for targeted, place-based interventions.

Improving attendance, increasing attainment rates, and strengthening transitions from secondary school into further training or employment pathways across these schools would create a measurable shift in outcomes for Pacific learners. This includes ensuring that students are supported into pathways aligned with future workforce demand.

The Government's ongoing reform of the National Certificate of Educational Achievement (NCEA), alongside the strengthening of vocational education opportunities, presents a timely opportunity to better align education pathways with labour market needs. There is scope to ensure that Pacific learners are well-positioned to benefit from these changes through targeted support and clear pathways.

Youth Employment

- **Youth employment is a high impact lever that will ensure Pacific young people gain experience and acquire valuable skills early in their lives.**

In December 2025, the seasonally adjusted rate of young people not in employment, education, or training (NEET) was 13.2%, contributing significantly to overall unemployment. For Pacific young people aged 15–24 years, this rate is higher at 21%, indicating a disproportionate impact.

Improving Pacific youth employment requires strengthening pathways from education into sustainable employment, supporting early work experience such as internships and entry-level roles, and ensuring tertiary participation leads to meaningful and relevant qualifications.

There is an opportunity to leverage the role of Pacific businesses, which often employ a higher proportion of Pacific workers and contribute to community-based economic participation. Strengthening connections between employers, education providers, and young people will be critical to improving outcomes.

Given that a large proportion of Pacific youth are New Zealand-born and educated within the New Zealand system, there is strong potential to improve outcomes through targeted interventions at key transition points.

Pacific Innovation

- **Advancing Pacific innovation presents an opportunity to strengthen both Pacific economic outcomes and New Zealand's broader economy.**

While the workforce is becoming more qualified, this has not consistently translated into productivity gains, suggesting a need to better connect skills development with innovation and economic value. There is an opportunity to ensure Pacific peoples are well positioned within New Zealand's emerging innovation ecosystem. This includes supporting Pacific participation in high-growth sectors and enabling pathways into innovation-led industries. The Ministry recently announced the Game On initiative to place Pacific young people in well-paid tech and gaming careers.

Pacific communities bring unique strengths, including strong networks, cultural capability, and connections across the Pacific region. In some cases, Pacific communities are at the forefront of responding to global challenges such as climate adaptation, generating new approaches and knowledge and business innovation. Over time, there may be opportunities to leverage this experience to contribute to New Zealand's broader innovation capability and economic

development. Strengthening the link between skills, innovation, and economic outcomes will be important to ensure that increasing capability translates into sustained growth and improved productivity.

Your portfolio responsibilities

In the following sections, we briefly outline our suggested mechanisms for supporting you in your role as the Minister for Pacific Peoples.

Your role as Minister for Pacific Peoples

As the responsible portfolio Minister for the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, you are accountable to Parliament for the Ministry's overall efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. Your responsibilities in this role include the following.

- Setting the policy direction and priorities for the portfolio.
- Being accountable to the House for the policies, performance, public spending, and performance of the Ministry.
- Strengthening the Government's relationship with Pacific communities.
- Engaging with Ministerial colleagues towards improving outcomes for Pacific peoples.
- Appointing Trust Boards.

Upcoming actions and decisions

The following upcoming actions and decisions will be required within the first few months of your appointment. The Ministry will provide you with advice to support these decisions. Additional board appointments information is attached as **Appendix 2** and board membership as **Appendix 3**.

Actions/decisions required	Timing
Estimates	
2025/26 Supplementary Estimates & 2026/27 Estimates Documentation	April 2026
Board Appointments	
s9(2)(f)(iv)	
Pacific Business Trust Board	April 2026
Pasifika Education Centre Board (trading as Centre for Pacific Languages)	April 2026
Community Engagements you may wish to attend	
Pasifika Digital Showcase – Auckland	10 April 2026

Nelson Pasifika Festival – Nelson	May 2026
Polyfest Samoan Speech Competition – Auckland	18 June 2026
Hutt Fest – Lower Hutt	22 – 26 June 2026
Manawatu Pasifika Fusion Festival – Palmerston North	1 – 2 July 2026
Tu Tagata Festival – Wellington	July 2026
Language Weeks you may wish to acknowledge	
Rotuma Language Week	May 2026
Samoa Language Week	May 2026
Kiribati Language Week	July 2026
Vanuatu Bislama Language Week	July 2026

Suggested stakeholder engagements

Over the years, we have built strong working relationships with Pacific communities, and we will support you to connect with critical community leaders and stakeholders.

These stakeholders are diverse and span faith-based organisations, youth, Pacific Rainbow+ communities, women, people with disabilities, non-government organisations, ethnic-specific organisations, and Realm communities.

We will support you in engaging with key Pacific stakeholders and communities liaising with your office on the necessary arrangements and briefing material. The Ministry recommends meeting with the following stakeholders as an initial introduction to the portfolio:

- **Pacific Business Trust (PBT)** – Mary Los’e (CEO), Uluomato’otua Saulaulau Aiono (Chair) to discuss the delivery of core services to Pacific businesses, including funding, mentoring, and networking opportunities.
- **Pasifika Education Centre Board (trading as Centre for Pacific Languages (CPL))** – Fesaitu Solomone (CEO), Sina Wendt (Chair) to discuss Pacific language courses to upskill Pacific communities and support recognition of valued language skills.

How we will support you

The Ministry is here to support you to carry out your Ministerial duties and advance your strategic priorities for Pacific peoples. We will do this through a combination of in-person briefings at officials meetings and regular updates in the weekly report, written briefings on portfolio matters and advice relating to board appointments, honours awards, and programme updates.

About the Ministry for Pacific Peoples

The Ministry has been through significant change over the past three years. Following broad restructuring and reduction in staff numbers, we are now a team of 86 staff across offices in Auckland, Wellington (national office), Porirua and Christchurch.

We are well positioned to continue and to improve our delivery on behalf of the government for Pacific communities to:

- provide expert advice on policies and interventions relating to Pacific peoples
- co-design and deliver initiatives with and for Pacific communities in economic growth, housing, skills, training and employment, education, language and culture
- provide direct funding and investment to Pacific organisations and communities
- provide system leadership and align all-of-government efforts to improve Pacific peoples' outcomes.
- strengthen data and insights to support evidence-based decision-making and better targeted investment.

Given the end of time-limited funding and the consolidation or transfer of other programmes, we are currently reviewing the structure of our Commissioning and Partnerships Directorate to ensure we optimise our functions to best support the Pacific Peoples portfolio.

Key contacts

Gerardine Clifford-Lidstone, Secretary for Pacific Peoples

s9(2)(a)

Gerardine is the Secretary for Pacific Peoples and Chief Executive of the Ministry for Pacific Peoples, and she took on this role in February 2023.



Bernadette Scanlon, Deputy Secretary, Policy and Insights

s9(2)(a)

The Deputy Secretary, Policy and Insights leads the Ministry's work to generate high-quality Pacific data, insights, and strategic advice that drive effective decision-making across government.



Danilo Coelho de Almeida, Acting Deputy Secretary, Commissioning and Partnerships

s9(2)(a)

The Deputy Secretary Commissioning and Partnerships leads the Ministry's regional and national investment functions and relationships with Pacific communities.



Mauailegalu Mathew So'otaga, Acting Deputy Secretary, Corporate & Support Services

s9(2)(a)

The Deputy Secretary Corporate and Support Services (CSS) ensures the Ministry has the people, systems, processes, technology, and resources to operate effectively and efficiently.



Lu Avia, Chief Advisor to the Secretary

s9(2)(a)

The Executive Office supports the Secretary and the Minister's Office. It leads the Ministry's accountability cycle, performance, and ministerial servicing functions.



Appendix 1: Current work programme

Strategic priority	Funding			Description	Key targets for 2025/26
Economic Growth	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	<p>Pacific Business Village</p> <p>The Ministry funds the Pacific Business Trust (PBT), who plays a proactive role in supporting Pacific businesses into sustained growth. PBT provide support to Pacific businesses through the delivery of a range of business-facing services nationwide.</p> <p>PBT also administers the Pacific Business Village (PBV), which provides a strategic framework for long-term economic development and sustained growth in the Pacific business sector. PBV includes regional networks, who connect with Pacific businesses in their respective region and partner them with providers, and regional providers who deliver specialist advice to businesses.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create up to 200 new jobs every year Transition of Pacific Business Village to Pacific Business Trust
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	<p>Game On</p> <p>Game On is a four-year initiative developed with industry and Pacific partners to create clearer pathways for Pacific youth into New Zealand's gaming sector. In collaboration with The Cause Collective, PikPok, the New Zealand Game Developers Association, and Tupu Toa, this initiative supports Pacific youth from initial engagement and training through to employment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery commencing July 2026 for 57 Pacific youth
Health	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	<p>Pacific Healthy Homes</p> <p>The Pacific Healthy Homes initiative aims to make sure more Pacific families living in South Auckland and Porirua have warmer, drier and healthier homes. Pacific Healthy Homes connects older Pacific peoples and their families in these areas, particularly those who suffer from chronic health conditions, with local providers who can assess their homes and provide help with access to curtains, ventilation, heating, insulation, education, or minor repairs. The initiative builds on Health New Zealand's Healthy Homes Initiative and the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Authority's Warmer Kiwi Homes programme and is tailored specifically for Pacific communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver healthy housing initiatives to 150 households in South Auckland Deliver healthy housing initiatives to 50 households in Porirua
Housing	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	<p>Our Whare, Our Fale</p> <p>Our Whare Our Fale (OWOF) project is a community-led housing initiative supporting affordable home ownership for Pacific families in Eastern Porirua. The OWOF project will build up to 300 affordable, good quality homes over the next decade.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 25 – 35 affordable homes (joint housing target)
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	<p>Pacific Building Affordable Homes</p> <p>The Pacific Building Affordable Homes Fund aimed to increase Pacific home ownership rates by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> supporting the building of affordable homes for eligible Pacific families to purchase for home ownership; and encouraging innovative approaches to housing and/or development design that ensure the needs and aspirations of Pacific families, including multigenerational living are met. <p>Homes supported through the Pacific Building Affordable Homes Fund are delivered and sold by independent housing providers. Availability and purchasing processes are managed directly by those providers.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of 25 – 35 affordable homes (joint housing target)

	2025/26 \$2.19m	2026/27 \$2.09m	2027/28 \$1.54m	Financial Capability The Ministry engages service providers to deliver financial literacy and mentorship for Pacific peoples across New Zealand. This is aimed at strengthening their financial capability to help manage personal finances and generate savings towards homeownership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,500 participants in Financial Literacy programmes 200 Households have home ownership plans
Education and languages	2025/26 \$5.3m	2026/27 \$0m	2027/28 \$0m	Tupu Aotearoa Tupu Aotearoa aims to assist Pacific peoples who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) to obtain sustainable employment and/or undertake further training to increase their skills or qualifications. From 1 July 2026, Tupu Aotearoa will transition to MSD and be delivered as an employment focused service. The shift in the scope of delivery supports MSD's government targets of 50,000 fewer people on jobseeker support by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support 1,000 Pacific peoples into new jobs, education, or training
	2025/26 \$1.22m	2026/27 \$1.22m	2027/28 \$1.22m	Toloa Toloa supports Pacific students into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) qualifications and training pathways. Support for Pacific students into STEM qualifications and pathways are provided through two avenues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary and tertiary scholarships focusing on participation and completion in STEM subjects to enrich the engagement of Pacific in STEM, and Toloa Community Fund which supports Pacific-led initiatives that inspire and prepare Pacific young peoples to thrive in STEM fields. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver 400 Toloa Secondary Scholarships Deliver 11 Toloa Tertiary Scholarships \$785,000 invested into 5 providers across New Zealand to deliver STEM initiatives for Pacific young peoples
	2025/26 \$6.15m	2026/27 \$4.85m	2027/28 \$4.85m	Languages The languages work programme includes a suite of initiatives to support the maintenance and revitalisation of Pacific languages in New Zealand. Language proficiency and bilingualism is critical to cultural connection, wellbeing, and supports success in education, employment and health outcomes. This funding delivers free Pacific language classes, Pacific language radio and media production, new Pacific language resources, Pacific Language Weeks and community-driven language initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2,500 enrolments in Pacific language courses 1,000 completions of Pacific language courses 7,300 Pacific language broadcasting hours 200,000 interactions with Pacific language week social media content 70% of community groups language projects have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of participants 3.5% engagement rate with language week content 300,000 listeners of Pacific language radio 200 new written, visual, and/or oral Pacific language resources
	2025/26 \$420K	2026/27 \$420K	2027/28 Nil	Dawn Raids The Ministry is developing resources to ensure the history and impact of the Dawn Raids is documented, understood, and taught. The aim is to foster healing and awareness for current and future generations through various workstreams including Vaka of Stories, Community Stories Publications, Full History Publication, and a Teaching Resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Vaka of Stories 1 & 2 Projects Contract editor to deliver Full History Publication
Law and order	2025/26 \$250K	2026/27 \$250K	2027/28 \$250K	Pacific Wardens The Ministry is supporting the expansion of Pacific Wardens' community-led safety and wellbeing services through new Budget 2025 funding. This investment strengthens coordination, training, and operational support, enabling more structured and scalable delivery. The initiative builds on the Wardens' existing role as trusted responders in Pacific communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capability and resourcing (3 FTE) Deliver training (First aid, and NZ Police basic training) to all Pacific Wardens Deployment of Pacific Wardens to at least 90% of identified priority events

Appendix 2: Appointments overview

The Ministry plays a key role in identifying and nominating qualified Pacific candidates for state sector boards and committees. You are responsible for appointments to four Boards within your portfolio: the Pacific Business Trust, the Centre for Pacific Languages, the National Pacific Radio Trust Board, and the Pacific Education Foundation Board, in accordance with the Public Finance Act and the relevant Trust Deeds or establishing documents, with some positions requiring joint decisions with other Ministers.

Across these entities, upcoming appointment activity reflects a mix of expired terms now in rollover, scheduled term expiries, and existing vacancies. Several Boards also require appointments to specified governance roles, such as Chair, Deputy Chair, and Treasurer. An overview of each Board and upcoming vacancies is provided below.

Pacific Business Trust Board (next appointment process begins in March 2026)

Under the Trust's governance arrangements, the Board must include a Chair and Deputy Chair and currently has eight appointed members. s9(2)(g)(i)

The Pacific Business Trust is a charitable trust that supports Pacific economic development through business advisory services, capability building programmes, and initiatives that strengthen entrepreneurship and employment. The Ministry administers the Government's annual grant to PBT and manages the appointments process.

National Pacific Radio Trust Board (next appointment process April 2026)

Under the Trust Deed, the Board must have a Chair, Deputy Chair, and Treasurer, and comprises up to seven appointed members. s9(2)(g)(i)

The National Pacific Radio Trust owns and operates the Pacific Media Network, a pan-Pacific national broadcasting service delivering NiuFM and 531pi from Auckland, and Samoa Capital Radio from Wellington. Appointments to this Board are made jointly by the Minister for Pacific Peoples and the Minister for Broadcasting and Media.

All mandatory roles (Chair, Deputy Chair, Treasurer) are currently filled. s9(2)(g)(i)

Centre for Pacific Languages (next appointment process April 2026)

Under the Trust Deed, the Centre for Pacific Languages is governed by a Board of Trustees that is responsible for the overall control, administration, and strategic direction of the Trust. The Board is appointed by the Minister, who may also appoint Ministry officials as ex-officio members. The number of Trustees must be no fewer than five and no more than seven at any time. s9(2)(g)(i)

The Board's primary function is to carry out the Objects of the Trust which includes managing the Trust's property, finances, and affairs, setting strategic priorities, and ensuring accountability and compliance with relevant legislation.

Pacific Education Foundation Board (next appointment process May 2026)

Under the Foundation's establishing arrangements, the Board must include a Chair, Deputy Chair, and Treasurer, and comprises six appointed positions plus two ex officio members. s9(2)(g)(i)

The Pacific Education Foundation administers education scholarships for Pacific learners across New Zealand. Appointments are made jointly by the Minister for Pacific Peoples and the Minister for Education, with ex officio representatives from the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for Pacific Peoples.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Appendix 3: Board Members

BOARD	MEMBER	TERM EXPIRY
Pasifika Education Centre (operating as Centre for Pacific Languages)	Sina Wendt (Chair)	31 July 2026
	Eli Tagi	31 September 2026
	Dr Rae Siilata	31 September 2026
	Christine Ammunson	31 July 2027
	Dr Linitā Manu'atu	31 July 2027
	Dr Edmond Fehoko	31 October 2027
	Dr Polu Apollo Taito	31 December 2028
Pacific Business Trust	Dr Uluomato'otua Saulaulu Aiono (Chair)	31 December 2028
	Dain Guttenbeil (Deputy Chair)	31 July 2026
	Leulua'itumua Agnes Loheni	31 July 2027
	Nora Swann	31 December 2028
	Letelemalanuola Tuitofa Moe-Penn	31 December 2028
	Lealiifanovale Erolia Rooney	31 December 2028
	Letoa Henry Jenkins	31 December 2028
National Pacific Media Trust (operating and Pacific Media Network)	Sai Lealea (Chair)	31 December 2025 (provisional rollover)
	Holona Lui (Deputy Chair)	31 October 2027
	Ruth Sio-Lokam (Treasurer)	31 May 2028
	Teremoana Rapley	31 October 2027
	Dr Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel	31 May 2028
	Hinurewa Te Hau	31 June 2028
	Vacant	N/A
	Vacant	N/A
Pacific Education Foundation	Professor Jodie Hunter (Chair)	8 February 2026 (Provisional rollover)
	Ioane Aleke Fa'avae (Deputy Chair)	8 February 2026 (Provisional rollover)
	Fa'alogo Rosi Fitzpatrick (Treasurer)	8 February 2026 (Provisional rollover)
	Issac ('Aisake) Liava'a	8 February 2026
	Ministry of Education delegate	Ex officio
	Ministry for Pacific Peoples delegate	Ex Officio
	Vacant	N/A
	Vacant	N/A