

Pacific Action Plan

Toitū te Waiora
(2025)



Contents

Introduction	2
Section One: About Toitū te Waiora	2
Section Two: Rationale and drivers for our Pacific Action Plan	3
Commitment to government direction	3
Commitment to workforce development	3
Pacific People in Aotearoa New Zealand	4
Pacific people and the economy	5
How Toitū te Waiora can effect change	5
Section Three: Actions	7
Supporting qualifications and providers	7
Supporting industry	8
Building organisational capability	9
Supporting the wider community	11
Bibliography	13



Introduction

This Pacific Action Plan for Toitū te Waiora (Community, Health, Education and Social Services) Workforce Development Council has been developed to support Pacific learners who may undertake our qualifications, the providers that deliver the qualifications, the industries we support, and our kamahi.

Our Pacific Action Plan covers all aspects of our role and work, both internal and external. The actions will help us understand the needs of and provide services and products for Pacific peoples.

The actions described in the plan (see Section 2) will make our products, services and workplace more inclusive and responsive to the needs of Pacific peoples.

The Pacific Action Plan was finalised in May 2025.

Section One: About Toitū te Waiora

Toitū te Waiora represents industries including care services; disability services; education and educational support services; funeral services; health services; public order safety; regulatory services; skin and nail therapy services; social services; urban pest control.

We work with industry and employers to understand the skills needed in these workforces. We lead the development of industry qualifications, set industry standards and assess training provision against these industry standards.

We work collaboratively across the vocational education sector and endorse vocational education programmes before they are approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA).

We also engage with the Tertiary Education Commission, NZQA, and tertiary education organisations to support and improve outcomes for all learners in our industries.

Our Strategic Direction has an overarching goal of a skilled and qualified workforce for Aotearoa New Zealand. This goal is underpinned by three strategic goals: voice of industry, responsive qualifications, and influential advice.

To achieve our goals and deliver our work, we need to build organisational capability, guided by our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The actions in this Pacific Action Plan (see Section 2) will specifically help us meet these goals, specifically voice of industry, responsive qualifications, and building organisational capability.



Section Two: Rationale and drivers for our Pacific Action Plan

Commitment to government direction

Toitū te Waiora is required under the [Education \(Community, Health, Education, and Social Services Workforce Development Council\) Order 2021](#) to act in a manner that:

- contributes to an education system that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori–Crown relationships (s7(1)(a))
- seeks to contribute to an education system that provides opportunities for all people to reach their full potential and capabilities in the specified industries, including those who have been traditionally underserved by the education system (s7(1)(d));

When performing its functions under section 366 of the Act, the Council must give effect to the relevant parts of the tertiary education strategy. The parts of the Tertiary Education Strategy most relevant to this Pacific Action Plan are:

- **Barrier free access:** Reduce barriers to education for all, including for Māori and Pacific learners / ākonga, disabled learners / ākonga, and those with learning support needs (Objective Two, Priority Three)
- **Future of learning and work:** Collaborate with industries and employers to ensure learners/ākonga have the skills, knowledge and pathways to succeed in work (Objective Four, Priority Seven)

When performing its duty under section 369(2)(b) of the Act to have regard to the needs of Māori and other population groups identified in the tertiary education strategy, the Council must consult the persons it considers on reasonable grounds represent those population groups.

Also, Toitū te Waiora must, under the [Employment Relations Act 2000](#) (sections 104 and 105) and the [Human Rights Act 1993](#), behave as a fair and accommodating employer of all people.

Commitment to workforce development

Toitū te Waiora is committed to workforce development across all the industries it supports.

A productive, appropriately qualified, and competent workforce that can work safely is essential to improving outcomes for Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. It also contributes to positive outcomes for wider society.



In this environment, the qualifications and learning pathways available to those who want to work or upskill in roles must be fit for purpose, targeted and meet current workforce needs.

Alongside improving outcomes for people who are supported by the workforce, a workforce with higher qualifications will, over time, lead to a more productive sector – yielding good return on investment in training for both individuals and organisations.

Pacific People in Aotearoa New Zealand

According to the 2023 Census (2023), Pacific peoples make up approximately 9% of the Aotearoa New Zealand population, equating to 442,632 people who identify as Pacific peoples¹. The Pacific people's population grew by 16% from the 2018 census to the 2023 census, whereas NZ population grew by 6% over the same period². Pacific peoples are the youngest population with the highest birth rate. The median age of the Pacific people's population is 25 years, whereas the median age for all New Zealanders is 38.1 according to 2023 Census³. The youthfulness of the Pacific population means that Pacific people will make up a third of Auckland's working-age population within the decade.

The Pacific population is also becoming more diverse with a large and growing number of ethnically diverse and blended families and Pacific young people who navigate many intersecting cultural realms. Twenty percent of Pacific people (40 percent of Pacific children aged 0–4 years) identify with more than one ethnic group (compared with 7 percent of non-Pacific people). Many also identify with both ancestral Pacific Island homelands and contemporary New Zealand values and cultural practices⁴.

Pacific communities across New Zealand are diverse and dynamic, with rich and varied genealogies, histories, languages, cultures, and identities. Despite this diversity, enduring cultural values are shared among Pacific groups. These values include the importance of family, collectivism and communitarianism, spirituality, reciprocity and respect⁵.

Because Pacific peoples comprise a broad group, we use the term 'Pacific' throughout the Action Plan. However, it is important that actions determined under the Plan are responsive to and include ethnic-specific approaches that meet the needs of different Pacific communities where this is appropriate.

¹ [2023 Census population counts \(by ethnic group, age, and Māori descent\) and dwelling counts | Stats NZ](#)

² [2023 Census population counts \(by ethnic group, age, and Māori descent\) and dwelling counts | Stats NZ](#)

³ [2023 Census national and regional data | Stats NZ](#)

⁴ [Pacific Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2020–2025, MOH](#)

⁵ [Tofa Saili: Pacific Health Equity Review | Pacific Perspectives](#), 2023



Pacific people and the economy

Of the total labour force in year ended December 2023, 6% identified as Pacific Peoples⁶. Pacific people participate in the economy primarily as employed workers rather than as asset owners, investors, or entrepreneurs⁷.

In 2023, Pacific Peoples contributed 6% to the overall Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 6% to the Toitū te Waioira industries⁸ - matching their representation in our workforces to their contribution to overall GDP⁹.

While our latest figures are from 2023, earlier work from Treasury (2018) highlights that Pacific peoples contributions extend beyond traditional GDP measures, including cultural capital, spiritual wellbeing and extensive unpaid volunteer and community work. Pacific individuals engage in various activities, including church functions, governance roles, childcare, and event organisation. Many Pacific peoples' non-profit organisations depend on the hard work of volunteers. Pacific peoples not for profit organisations receive about 26,700 volunteer hours weekly (equivalent to 670 full-time employees)¹⁰. This contribution to the 'unpaid' economy through roles such as caregiving, cultural responsibilities including community leadership is an important part of many Pacific peoples' lives. These factors should be considered when developing qualifications and products that reflect and support better outcomes for them.

How Toitū te Waioira can effect change

Toitū te Waioira has limited direct engagement with learners, therefore our Pacific Action Plan focuses on effecting change using other levers, particularly those in our control.

To effect change in areas outside our control, longer term actions (for the pending Industry Skills Board, from 2026) could focus on working with and influencing relevant organisations and agencies in the sector who have control over other relevant levers, for example, NZQA and the Tertiary Education Commission.

External mandates	
The government has responsibilities to increase equity in educational outcomes for all people.	Drivers for increasing equity include the Tertiary Education Strategy (noting the Tertiary Education Strategy is currently under review)

⁶ Household Labour Force Survey - Labour Force Status by Sex by Total Response Ethnic Group (Annual-Dec)

⁷ [Pacific Employment Action Plan, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2022](#)

⁸ [GDP occupation forecasts - Sweet Analytics](#)

⁹ Caveats:

- People are counted once for each ethnic group they identify with, so some of the people in this group will also be part of other ethnicities' GDP contribution calculations.
- The definition used for this data set GDP is different to the one Stats NZ use, and so these numbers should not be compared to Stats NZ's published GDP numbers.
 - The key difference is that SDP's numbers ignore tax as a part of GDP.

¹⁰ [New Zealand Pacific Peoples Economy, Treasury, 2018](#)



Levers and tools in our control

<p>We have external and internal levers and tools in our control that we use to develop, monitor and assess qualifications, and provide advice to industry and the wider sector.</p> <p>We are also an employer of people.</p>	<p>External levers and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pacific people who undertake our qualifications• Providers who deliver our qualifications and training• Sectors and industries we represent who deliver services to Pacific peoples.• Our qualification development, review and assessment function <p>Internal levers and tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People related systems, processes and practices.• Our organisation as an employer of Pacific people
--	---

Influencing others

<p>Toitū te Waiora kaimahi and Council have a role in influencing industry and educational providers by promoting our work and our commitment to equity, and by making connections between inter-related pieces of work with NZQA, the Tertiary Education Commission and any relevant industry bodies.</p>	<p>Those involved include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Senior Leadership Team and people leaders• our Council and individual members• our kaimahi• providers we interact with• industries we support.
--	---



Section Three: Actions

This section outlines our planned immediate actions to improve outcomes for Pacific peoples. We also suggest longer term actions which should be considered by the pending Industry Skills Board from 2026 onwards.

Actions are grouped according to three areas of our work:

- supporting qualifications and providers (responsive qualifications goal)
- supporting industry (voice of industry goal)
- building organisational capability (supporting our people)

Timeframes for our work in 2025 do not allow for significant monitoring of outcomes, but activity and progress implementing the Pacific Action Plan over 2025 will be reported on through our usual project and organisational performance reporting processes.

Supporting qualifications and providers

The core role of Toitū te Waiora is to develop qualifications, establish standards and evaluate training provisions in our areas of remit. We seek to ensure our qualifications and standards are current, flexible, accessible to learners and meet industry needs now and in the future. We also support providers who deliver the qualifications we manage.

What we have done in this space

We have partnered with Pacific organisations to develop product designed to meet Pacific community needs. Product developed includes:

- US25987(Describe values and culturally safe principles for Pacific people in a health or wellbeing setting).
- Micro credential development Nga Vaka o Kāiga Tapu in partnership with the Cause Collective and NZ Academy of Learning Institute (NZALI): (Ethnic Specific Service Delivery Models)

Areas for improvement

Our qualifications products and quality assurance services should meet the needs of Pacific communities and be accessible and inclusive.

Anecdotal feedback from stakeholders indicates we need to broaden our approach and outreach to all stakeholders to understand their needs and improve how we work together across our functions.

How we will improve



At this time, there is no specific Pacific focused qualification development work underway. In the immediate term (for the 2025 year), we will continue to use current points of contact to ensure Pacific voice is enabled for the qualifications review and development processes underway.

Moving into the new organisational arrangements (2026 onwards), there are longer-term actions that should be considered by the future Industry Skills Boards to ensure Pacific partnerships are fully enabled in the qualification review and development space. These may include:

- Undertaking work to determine what 'good' looks like for Pacific people's involvement in qualification development and review. This work should be undertaken in partnership with Pacific people to understand how to define and measure what positive and productive involvement in review and development of qualifications products looks like.
- Further development of specific Pacific-focused qualifications which are identified in response to sector needs. This might include embedding cultural competencies in relevant qualifications. There is potential for the future Industry Skills Boards to reach out to more Pacific organisations to look for opportunities to develop qualifications products that supports Pacific people's needs.

Supporting industry

One of our key roles is supporting industries we are responsible for. This support function is broad, and we seek to understand our sectors and industries, and ensure our work addresses their workforce needs.

Areas for improvement

Industry organisations are time poor and may lack the internal capability to properly understand the experience of their Pacific employees, as data on the performance and experiences of Pacific people as employees is limited and not easy to access. This means it is hard for employers to understand how Pacific people are experiencing employment environments, which adds to challenges in understanding how to improve their experiences.

How we will improve

During 2025, we have the opportunity to ensure our sector and Pacific organisations we work with have better access to data about the experiences of their employees. We will do this through the following below:



Title	Description	Who is responsible	Date by
Share Pacific insights	Sharing sector, industry, workforce, and qualifications data with Pacific organisations prior to our disestablishment. This will involve modelling and packaging meta-data we have accessed from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and other sources and providing it to Pacific not for profits, relevant govt depts and advocacy groups (not profit-making organisations).	GM Strategy and Advice	30 October 2025
Annual report – showcasing stories of achievement or successes	Ensure Pacific stories of achievement and successes are showcased in the annual report.	GM Strategy and Advice	30 October 2025

Moving into the new organisational arrangements (2026 onwards), there are longer-term actions that should be considered by the future Industry Skills Boards to support improvement of outcomes for Pacific peoples in the industry space. Potential actions include:

- Data sharing agreements with stakeholders who represent Pacific peoples or have high Pacific people representation, to facilitate an information flow between Pacific focused / representing organisations and the Industry Skills Boards
- Work with relevant stakeholders and other ISBs to identify workforce planning outcomes that support People peoples.

Building organisational capability

The Council, Senior Leadership Team and people leaders of Toitū te Waiora have a responsibility to improve our ability to understand and respond to the needs of Pacific peoples, through building our organisational capability.



Kaimahi in Toitū te Waioira participated in cultural competency workshops that were facilitated by Catalyst Pacific to build understanding of cultural capability and how to apply it in their work.

Kaimahi also participated in development sessions to learn about the Mana Moana Pacific Outcomes Framework including the supporting rubric which provides guidance in how to apply Pacific values and outcomes in our work.

Creating a diverse workplace that is welcoming to a diverse community will also support diversity of thought across our work and widen our talent pool, and our ability to respond to sector needs.

Areas for improvement

Toitū te Waioira kaimahi may need more support with cultural competencies, particularly in certain roles and during a time of significant change. People leaders may need more support to manage and empower Pacific kaimahi.

How we will improve

During 2025, we will ensure all kaimahi have the support they need to have confidence they can respond to the needs of Pacific people as required in their roles. We will ensure Pacific kaimahi are enabled and empowered within the change process. We will do this by the following actions below:

Title	Description	Who is responsible	Date by
Cultural safety	Collate and share resources from other agencies (e.g; MPP All of Government Pacific Wellbeing Strategy, MOE – Tapasā, Talanoa Ako Frameworks, MOH - The Ola Manuia: Pacific Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2020-2025) to support managers in engaging in culturally safe conversations with Pacific kaimahi.	GM Strategy and Advice	30 October 2025
Professional development	Identify and provide tailored professional development and	GM Strategy and Advice	30 October 2025



	support for Pacific kaimahi who are impacted by organisational change.		
Stakeholder list	Updating a centrally held list of Pacific organisational contacts that cover our areas of interest, including key contacts, key relationship holder and advice on how to reach out to these organisations.	Poumatua / National Engagement Manager	30 June 2025

Moving into the new organisational arrangements (2026 onwards), there are longer-term actions that should be considered by the future Industry Skills Boards to support improvement of outcomes in the kaimahi space. These include the following actions below

- A wider focus in recruitment on looking for Pacific people for non-Pacific focused roles. This action is important to ensure that Pacific voice is integral in everything that Toitū te Waiora does.
- Implementing Pacific lead roles within the future Industry Skills Boards, as these will be important for embedding Pacific approaches
- Ensure Pacific lens is applied to internal systems, processes, policies, and practices to uphold cultural safety.

Supporting the wider community

Toitū te Waiora is a member of the wider community with an obligation to act as a “good citizen” in promoting and enabling equity. We aim to be trusted and influential advisors to our stakeholders.

Areas for improvement

Toitū te Waiora has an opportunity to build stronger relationships with Pacific people and better understand how they view our products and services: are they appropriate and inclusive and do they meet the needs of the Pacific community?

How we will improve



During 2025, we will look to our existing internal resource to improve our networks and connections to Pacific organisations. We will do this by:

Title	Description	Who is responsible	Date by
Building on current relationships	Leverage the community relationships of all our Pacific kaimahi to promote our work.	All SLT	30 October 2025

Moving into the new organisational arrangements (2026 onwards), there are longer-term actions that should be considered by the future Industry Skills Boards to ensure relationships with Pacific organisations and communities are robust. These include:

- Actively seeking out and capturing stories about Pacific people's success and workforce development in relevant sectors and industries
- Ensure kaimahi have the capability to apply a Pacific lens across workforce planning.



Bibliography

Action Plan for Pacific Education, 2020 – 2030. 2023 Refresh. Ministry of Education, 2023. [**Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030 - Ministry of Education**](#)

Census 2023. Statistics New Zealand. 2024.

- [**2023 Census population counts \(by ethnic group, age, and Māori descent\) and dwelling counts | Stats NZ**](#)
- [**2023 Census national and regional data | Stats NZ**](#)

Fale mo Aiga – Pacific Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2030. Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry of Housing and Urban Development, and Kāinga Ora, 2022. [**Ministry for Pacific Peoples — Fale mo Aiga**](#)

GDP and Occupation Forecasts. Workforce Development Councils. 2025. [**GDP occupation forecasts - Sweet Analytics**](#)

The New Zealand Pacific Economy. Treasury, 2018. [**New Zealand Pacific Economy - November 2018**](#)

Ola Manuia Pacific Health and Wellbeing Action Plan 2020-2025. Ministry of Health, 2020. [**Microsoft Word - Ola Manuia-PHWAP-22June.docx**](#)

Ola Manuia Interim Pacific Health Plan 2022-2023. Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora, 2022. [**Ola Manuia Interim Pacific Health Plan July 2022 - June 2024 – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora**](#)

Pacific Employment Action Plan. Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2022. [**Pacific-Employment-Action-Plan-FINAL-approved.pdf**](#)

Pacific Health Workforce Strategy 2022-2024. Health New Zealand Te Whatu Ora, 2022. [**Pacific Health Workforce Strategy – Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora**](#)

Pacific Languages Strategy 2022-2032. Ministry for Pacific Peoples, 2022. [**Pacific-Languages-Strategy-2022-2032.pdf**](#)

Pacific Prosperity - Our People, Our Solutions, Our Future. Ministry of Social Development, 2019. [**Pacific Prosperity - Our People, Our Solutions, Our Future - English Version**](#)

Soko ni Drua Action Plan. Muka Tangata, 2024 (unpublished, draft version provided by Muka Tangata).



Tofa Saili: A Review of Evidence about Health Equity for Pacific Peoples in New Zealand. Pacific Perspectives. July 2019. [**Tofa Saili: Pacific Health Equity Review | Pacific Perspectives**](#)

Takiala Pasifika 2020–2023 - NZQA's Action Plan for Pacific Learner Success. New Zealand Qualifications Authority, 2020. [**Takiala Pasifika 2020–2023 - NZQA's Action Plan for Pacific Learner Success**](#)