

**Making a Difference for Pacific People in Aotearoa-New Zealand:  
Links Between Policy Advice and Delivery of Services<sup>1</sup>**

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In order to address the links and dovetailing between the policy makers and those who work at the operational level, I need to contextualise the role of the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA) – where it has come from, where it is now, and where it is possibly heading in the future. Within this context, I will then discuss one specific priority stream that the ministry has identified – that is, the education sector, where the main focus of my work as a senior policy advisor is. This discussion paper does not profess to have all the answers, and neither does the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. However, it does bring a fresh approach to addressing some long term disparities and gaps between Pacific and non-Pacific people that continue to undermine Pacific peoples' well-being in Aotearoa and have not been successfully addressed through mainstream government agencies or ministries.

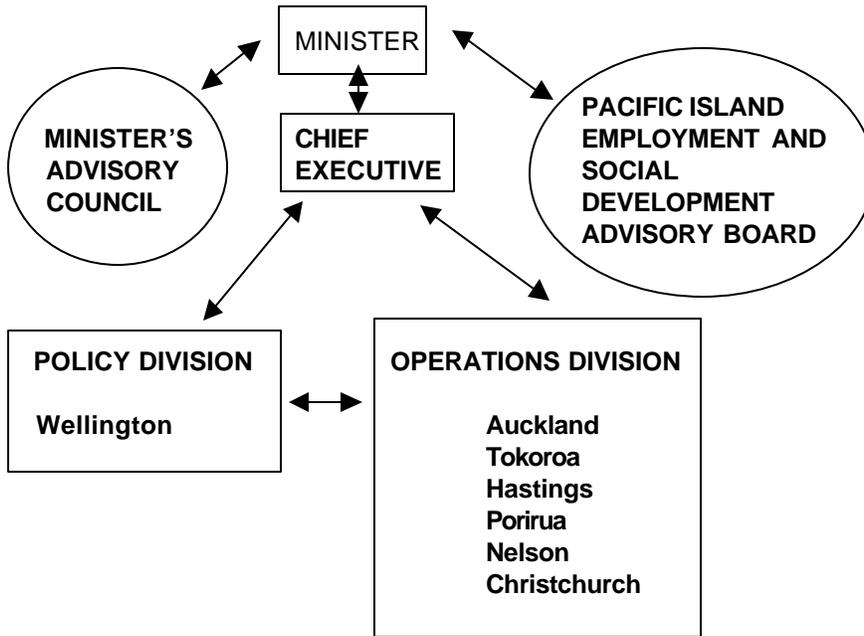
**The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs**

The Ministry underwent a cabinet review recently and was directed to withdraw from the delivery of educational and employment focussed programmes. The rationale for this was that the Ministry had become too focused on the operational side, at times duplicating services provided by other government agencies and departments. In effect, the Ministry could benefit more Pacific people through a strategic approach that was national, as opposed to assisting a fragmented number of small communities in Aotearoa. There was also minimal work in the policy area being accomplished again reinforcing the lack of representation from the Ministry at the strategic level. In 1997 the Ministry structure looked like this:

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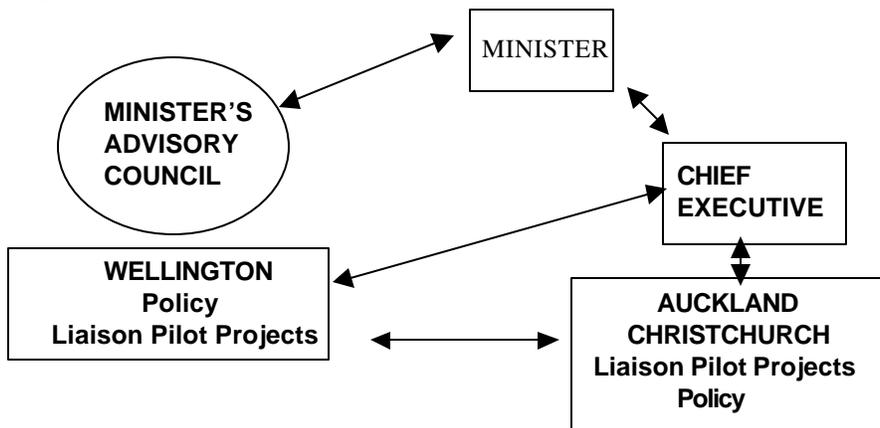
<sup>1</sup> Paper presented at the Pacific Teacher Educators' Conference held at the University of the South Pacific, 18-22 January, 1999.

**Fig. 1 Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs 1997 - Relationship Chart**



The Ministry in 1998 looked quite different and currently has a much stronger focus and capability in the policy arena.

**Fig 2 Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs 1998 - Relationship Chart**



The new look Ministry has a new vision and mission:

**MINISTRY OF PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS VISION:**

*Achieving Pacific aspirations – health, harmony and prosperity.*

**MINISTRY OF PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS MISSION:**

*To be the leader in public policy advice to improve outcomes for Pacific peoples in New Zealand.*

The ministry is working towards achieving the mission by:

- Providing advice on key policies and issues,
- Disseminating information and consulting with Pacific communities,
- Piloting innovative responses to issues affecting the socio-economic status of Pacific peoples and communities,
- Encouraging other government agencies to take responsibility for improving outcomes for Pacific peoples,
- Influencing and monitoring the development and implementation of government policies that affect Pacific peoples.

**Strategic Alliances**

Monitoring mainstream agencies' effectiveness in addressing negative statistics within their sectors is a key role of the Ministry and to enable us to fulfil that role we have developed and signed several formal relationship agreements with other key mainstream ministries and departments and will continue to explore others. One that is especially relevant here for this conference is the protocol

between MPIA and the Ministry of Education (MOE). Through the protocol both ministries are able to access and share information and contribute to policies and programmes that are responsive to Pacific cultural values and aspirations. Each year a joint work programme is agreed to – this is the current one.

**MINISTRY OF PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS AND MINISTRY OF  
EDUCATION JOINT WORKPLAN  
1998/1999**

1. Pacific Teacher Supply Project
2. Pacific Island Polynesian Education foundation (PIPEF)
3. Pacific Islands Early Childhood Education Policy
4. *Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika* (The education of Pacific Islands people in New Zealand)
5. Languages Policy
6. Withdrawal/Transfer of MPIA educational programmes
7. Social Workers in Schools Project
8. MOE Pacific Island Advisory Group

Another agreement that is significant is the relationship agreement between the MPIA and the *Te Puni Kokiri* (the Ministry of Maori Development) in December 1998. In Aotearoa, Maori are the *tangata whenua*, the indigenous people, people of the land, they are also our *whanaunga*, our kin. I would go further and say that Maori are our *teina* (young brother/sister) given that they are Pacific people. It is often acknowledged by *koro* and *kuia*, the old people, that *Hawaiki nui* was the homeland. So our relationship with Maori has a *whanau* (family) base.

Those who work for the MPIA walk a fine line and often have to balance their own values and beliefs with policies and strategies proposed by government. As a government ministry we are accountable to the government and are committed to giving our minister the best possible advice. However, hand in hand with this is our responsibility to the Pacific population in Aotearoa, for without them there would be no Ministry. It is not an easy task at times, managing this balance, ensuring that the policy work is more visible.

Expectations of the ministry are also difficult to meet at times, both from Pacific communities and from Pacific people working within mainstream agencies. However the ministry is in a much better position than it was even twelve months ago to advocate and provide the Pacific 'voice' that has been missing for so long at the policy making level.

### **Policy Work Programme**

In order to be the most effective and to ensure that we are 'making a difference' for Pacific people, we must prioritise our work. It would be very easy to slip into the reactive mode, given the wide range of disparities and gaps in service delivery facing our people. The challenge we face is in the advice we give government in order to ensure that the government formulates and implements policies to improve Pacific peoples' position in all aspects of life in Aotearoa. The MPIA has developed a tool to assist other government departments and ministries in their role of policy analysis and development. The Pacific Analysis Framework is hot off the press, having been formally launched just four weeks ago. The policy team within the ministry has identified several broad but key areas of work. They are:

#### **MPIA Policy Priorities 1998/99**

- Business/economic development
- Education
- Health
- Justice
- Labour market
- Welfare

I would now like to focus on some of the work in the education sector. We have only one person working full time on education policy, and one analyst who probably spends half of her time on education, with the remaining pool of analysts being available to assist when their work loads permit. The sector has been

categorised into *early childhood education, compulsory education, and post compulsory education.*

*Early Childhood Education* covers both Pacific and mainstream centres and includes the licensing and chartering of the centres, qualifications of the teachers and educators, and participating on the committee that allocates funds for renovating or building new centres. The ministry role is one of monitoring, advising and being a 'watch dog'.

*Compulsory Education* covers both primary and secondary schools and *Post-compulsory Education* encompasses the tertiary sector (polytechnics, universities, other providers such as private training establishments) and the National Qualifications Framework. The main role for the ministry in these two sectors is the same as in the early childhood sector.

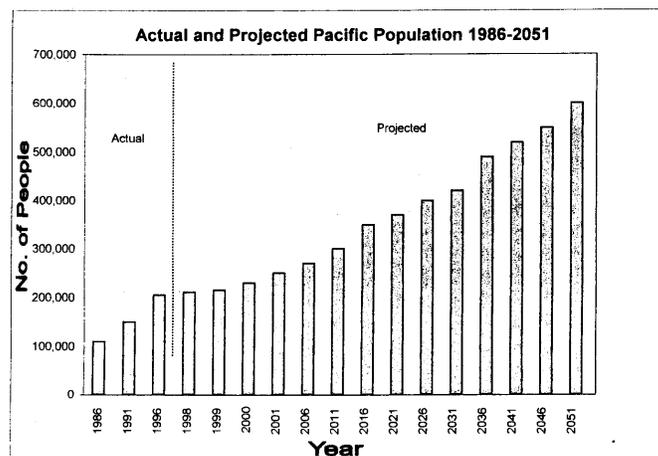
Statistical information and data play a major role in informing policy developers and analysts when defining or responding to a problem and seeking options or solutions. There is a general lack of data and information about Pacific people in Aotearoa. Knowledge and information are empowering and to this end the ministry has been gathering and developing its own resource base to address this gap, initially for the internal work for the ministry. Two-way communication with Pacific people is vital for the ministry to achieve its role successfully, and early this year the ministry plans to release status reports that indicate the current situation for Pacific people in key areas such as economics, employment, health, and education. These reports will play an important role in setting the scene for the international conference that the ministry is hosting in July this year. In the meantime, I would like to share with you some statistics we have on file to date. They concern the Pacific peoples of New Zealand and their ethnic origins.

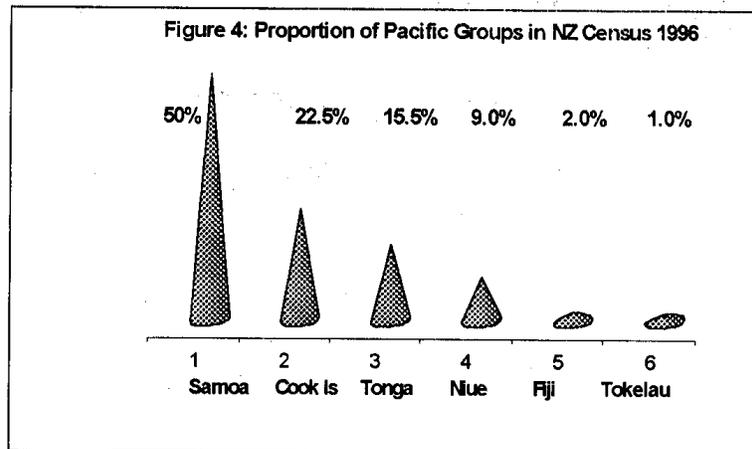
### **Pacific Peoples in New Zealand**

Pacific peoples are culturally and ethnically diverse. It is estimated that Pacific peoples living in New Zealand represent over 20 different

Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian cultures, speaking an even greater number of languages.

Pacific peoples comprise 6% of New Zealand's total population, numbering 227,000 out of a total population of approximately 3.8 million. However, the Pacific population is projected to increase to 12% of New Zealand's population by the year 2051. Figure 3 shows the actual Pacific population over a decade and how the projected Pacific population will increase over the next half century, and Figure 4 shows the composition of the Pacific population, according to Statistics New Zealand and the 1996 Census data.





I would like to spend the last part of this presentation show-casing two projects that are currently part of this year's work programme, the Pacific Teachers Supply Project and the Pacific Language Policy.

### **Pacific Teachers Supply Project**

Last year the government undertook several major policy reviews in the education sector through MOE covering; teacher education, tertiary education, the national qualifications framework, assessment in the primary sector. One of the issues that emerged from consultation on the teacher education review and was also highlighted in the MOE's plan *Ko e Ako 'a e Kakai Pasifika* was the supply of Pacific teachers. This was seen as one of the major barriers in relation to achievement and success for our young Pacific students because there is a significant mis-match between the number of Pacific students (see Table 1) and the number of Pacific teachers (see Table 2).

**Table 1 Number of Pacific primary and secondary students 1992-1997**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Primary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>	<b>All</b>
1992	28639 6.9%	15055 6.6%	44298 6.8%
1995	31791 7.1%	14537 6.6%	47255 6.9%
1997	n.a.	n.a.	51236 7.3%

Pacific students account for 7.3 percent of the combined population of primary and secondary schools as at 1997. This is an increase from 6.8% as at 1992. Most of this increase has occurred in the primary sector.

**Table 2 Pacific Teachers - Statistical Profile**

	<b>1990</b>		<b>1996</b>	
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>
Primary	290	1.5	495	2.1
Secondary	148	1.0	240	1.4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>438</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>735</b>	<b>1.8</b>

During June and July last year, the MPIA and MOE consulted together through focus *fono*, community *fono* and speaking with individual Pacific teachers, educators and providers to assist officials in formulating some policy perspectives to increase the number and percentage of Pacific teachers in the primary school sector. Negotiations with treasury are underway this week, so it is exciting knowing that this strategy could soon be a reality. This is where policy and those who implement the policy or deliver a service

based on a policy decision must communicate and have access to proposals and strategies. Mainstreaming will continue to be ineffective for minority groups if these links are not made and strengthened. One very positive aspect of this project is the fact that the MPIA was approached before any policy perspectives or analysis began. Both ministers were able to plan a joint consultation action plan, share the costs, and have input into the final consultation report released in September last year. This is an example of a protocol that is 'alive and working' and not just sitting on a shelf somewhere gathering dust. We will, of course, be participating fully in ongoing policy developments for this project.

### **Pacific Languages Policy**

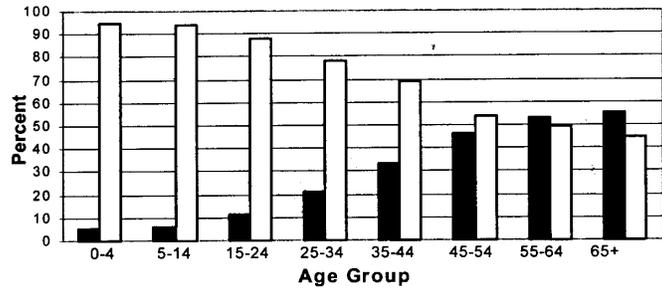
For all Pacific groups, the language ability of people under 25 years of age is lower than the average for all age groups. This suggests language loss between generations. As language is a major cornerstone of culture, this may become an increasingly important issue for Pacific peoples. Cook Island communities may have already reached a crisis point, with the proportions of Cook Islands Maori speakers under the age of 15 being in single figures. The language bar graphs show the status of the 6 main Pacific ethnic groups' language ability according to Statistics New Zealand and the 1996 Census data.

Although I acknowledge that the Samoan language has had significant resources to assist its ongoing maintenance in Aotearoa, the survival of the Fiji, Niue, Tokelau and Cook Island Maori languages remains a critical issue. This challenge must be addressed by the Government if the future demographic projections for Pacific people are to be adequately planned for.

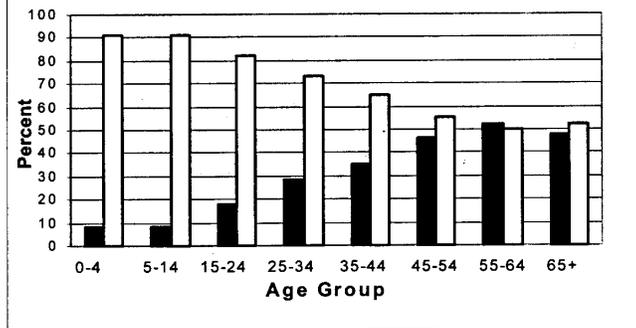
Ongoing work with MOE and their officials who are formulating policy for languages in the curriculum will be a high priority for the MPIA this year. The Cook Islands Government has given our ministry its support and official approval in our work on Pacific languages and in particular Cook Island Maori.

**Speakers and Non-Speakers of their own language - 1996**  
 ■ - Speakers    □ - Non Speakers

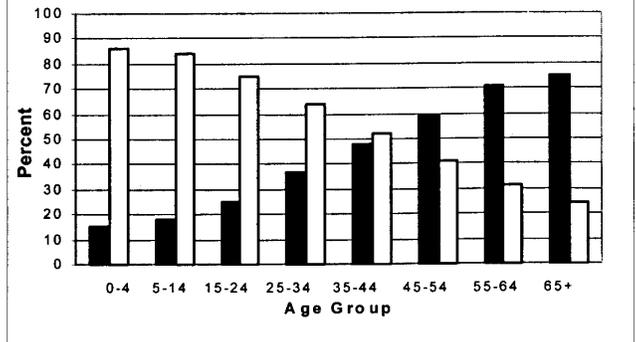
**Figure 5: Cook Islands**

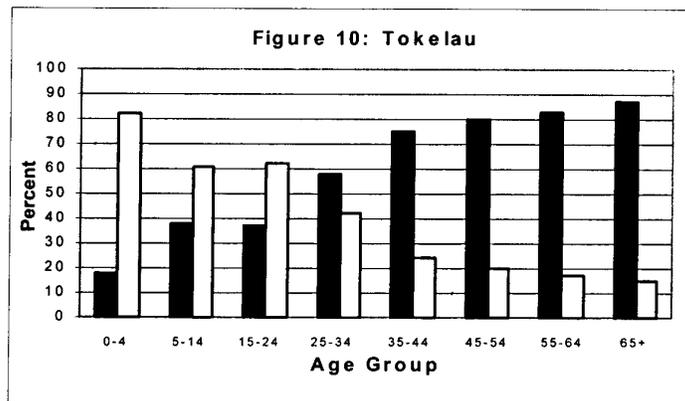
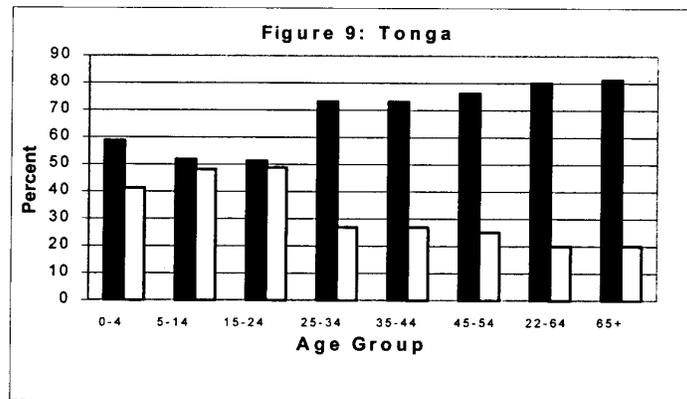
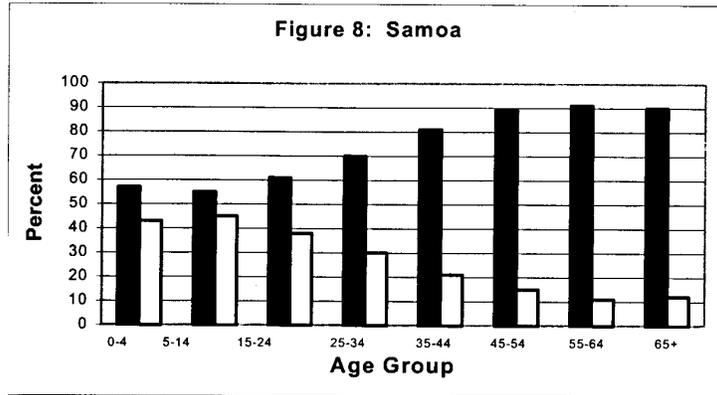


**Figure 6: Fijians**



**Figure 7: Niue**





The MPIA now needs to go out to Pacific communities and consult in order to ensure that the links are effective, everyone is informed, and decision making is inclusive of both the 'planners' and the 'builders'.

### **Challenges Ahead**

There are many challenges that face Pacific people in Aotearoa both currently and in the future, as there are for the MPIA and the government. Some of the key issues for Pacific education are:

- Promotion, survival and maintenance of Pacific languages and bilingual education,
- Quality teaching and assessment provided to Pacific students by all trained teachers,
- Supply, demand, and retention of Pacific teachers,
- Professional development including training for staff, management and parents,
- Culturally appropriate and adequate research on Pacific education,
- Adequate ongoing resourcing with long term co-ordinated goals,
- Raising the level of achievement of all Pacific students.

There are many other issues facing the Pacific population such as poor health, poverty, inadequate and unaffordable housing, unemployment, and over-representation of Pacific people in the criminal justice system. There is much hard work to be done but it can be done, although possibly not all at once. There is a Maori *whakatauki* (proverb) that expresses the positive attitude that I wish to leave you all with. It says:

*He moana pukepuke e ekengia e te waka.*  
(A choppy sea can be navigated.)

Do not become overburdened with negative thoughts and feelings but keep positive, persevere and focus on the successes already achieved and those yet to come.