

"SHARED FUTURES – DEEPENING OUR UNDERSTANDING OF MĀORI-PACIFIC IDENTITY IN AOTEAROA"

THE MINISTRY FOR PACIFIC PEOPLES' LONG-TERM INSIGHTS BRIEFING - SECOND ROUND OF CONSULTATION

BACKGROUND

The Ministry is writing a Long-term Insights Briefing

The Ministry for Pacific Peoples is consulting on an initial draft of its 2025 Long-term Insights Briefing. The Long-term Insights Briefing is an independent thinkpiece focused on the future. The final version will be presented to Ministers and released publicly later this year.

The Briefing is about Māori-Pacific peoples in Aotearoa

The Briefing explores the experiences and aspirations of people who identify as both Māori and Pacific peoples ('Māori-Pacific peoples'). It aims to inform future policy directions by highlighting the strengths, challenges, and opportunities facing Māori-Pacific peoples now and in the future. The initial draft for consultation draws on the first round of public consultation and data analysis.

Māori-Pacific identity is a timely and important topic

Aotearoa has a young, fast-growing Māori-Pacific population, which accounts for 1.9% of the total population and 5% of the under 15s population. This group brings rich cultural heritage, youthful energy, and unique perspectives. Acknowledging and unlocking Māori-Pacific potential can shape a more inclusive and prosperous future for all of Aotearoa.



WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR FIRST ROUND OF CONSULTATION

✖ Pride in multi-ethnic heritage

"A beautiful privilege to belong to both Pacific and Māori lineage."

Many respondents proudly described their Māori-Pacific identity as a source of strength, resilience, and cultural richness.

Many saw dual heritage as a privilege, offering "double helpings of values such as family, respect, and leadership for the good of others."

✖ Navigating complexities

"Having Māori-Pacific identity is complex... [like] walking a tightrope"

Some acknowledged challenges navigating between their Māori and Pacific heritage. Some felt tension between Māori and Pacific spaces, or exclusion from both.

Others face pressure to "choose a side" or be face being labelled by others in systems that do not reflect fluid, multi-ethnic identities.

✖ Language and culture matter

"Being embraced by culture grounds me in purpose"

Most felt that language and culture are central to identity and wellbeing. Reconnecting with heritage languages can improve cultural connection and confidence and help heal intergenerational trauma.

However, low language fluency (especially among youth) is an ongoing challenge and can impact on sense of belonging.

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WHAT WE LEARNED ABOUT MĀORI-PACIFIC PEOPLES FROM CENSUS 2023

WHO ARE MĀORI-PACIFIC PEOPLES?

- Population: 93,582. 1.9% of NZ population and nearly 5% of under 15s population.
- Young and vibrant: Median age of 15.3 years. 72% are under 25.
- Diverse Pacific ethnicities: 44% Samoan, 34% Cook Islands Māori, 18% Tongan, 13% Niuean.
- Born here: 95% were born in Aotearoa.
- Regionally spread: 46% live in Auckland Region; rest of population more distributed across NZ.
- Multi-ethnic identity: 54% of Māori and 43% of Pacific peoples identify with 2+ ethnicities.

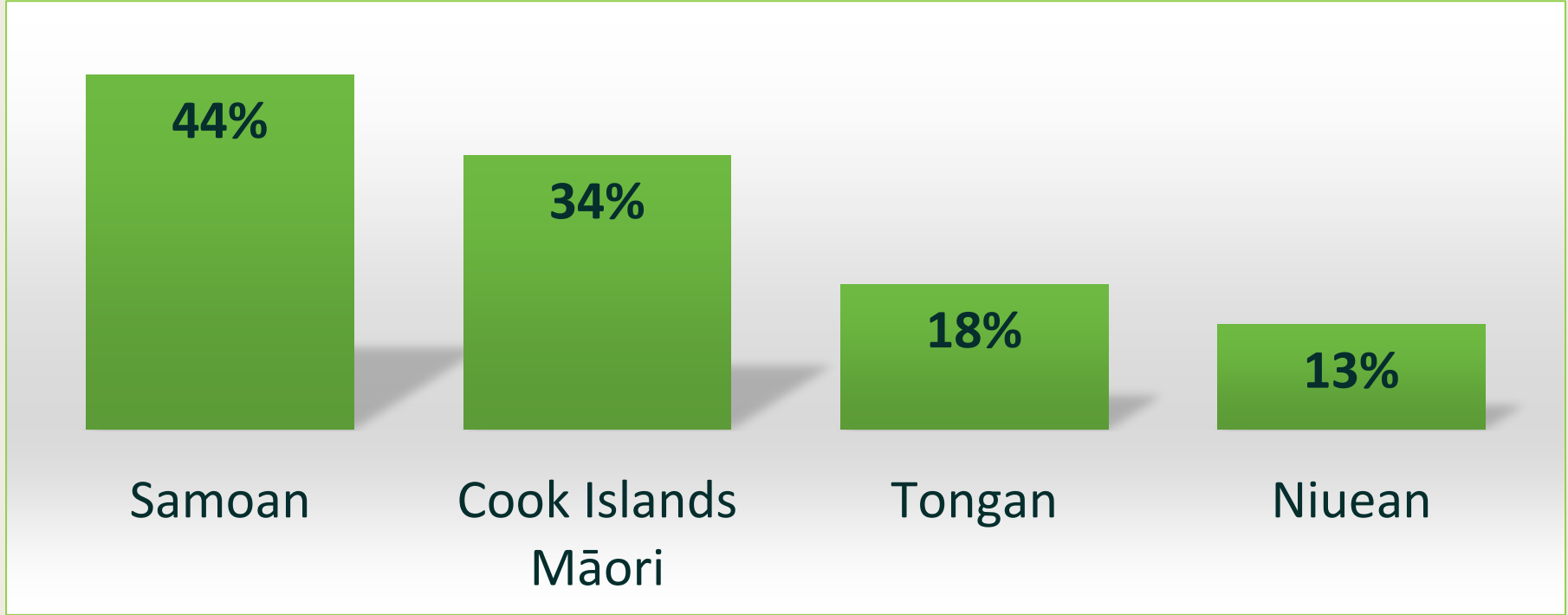
✦ Make up 1.9% of NZ population

Ethnic group	% of New Zealand population
Total New Zealand	100%
Māori	17.8%
Pacific peoples	8.9%
Māori-Pacific peoples	1.9%

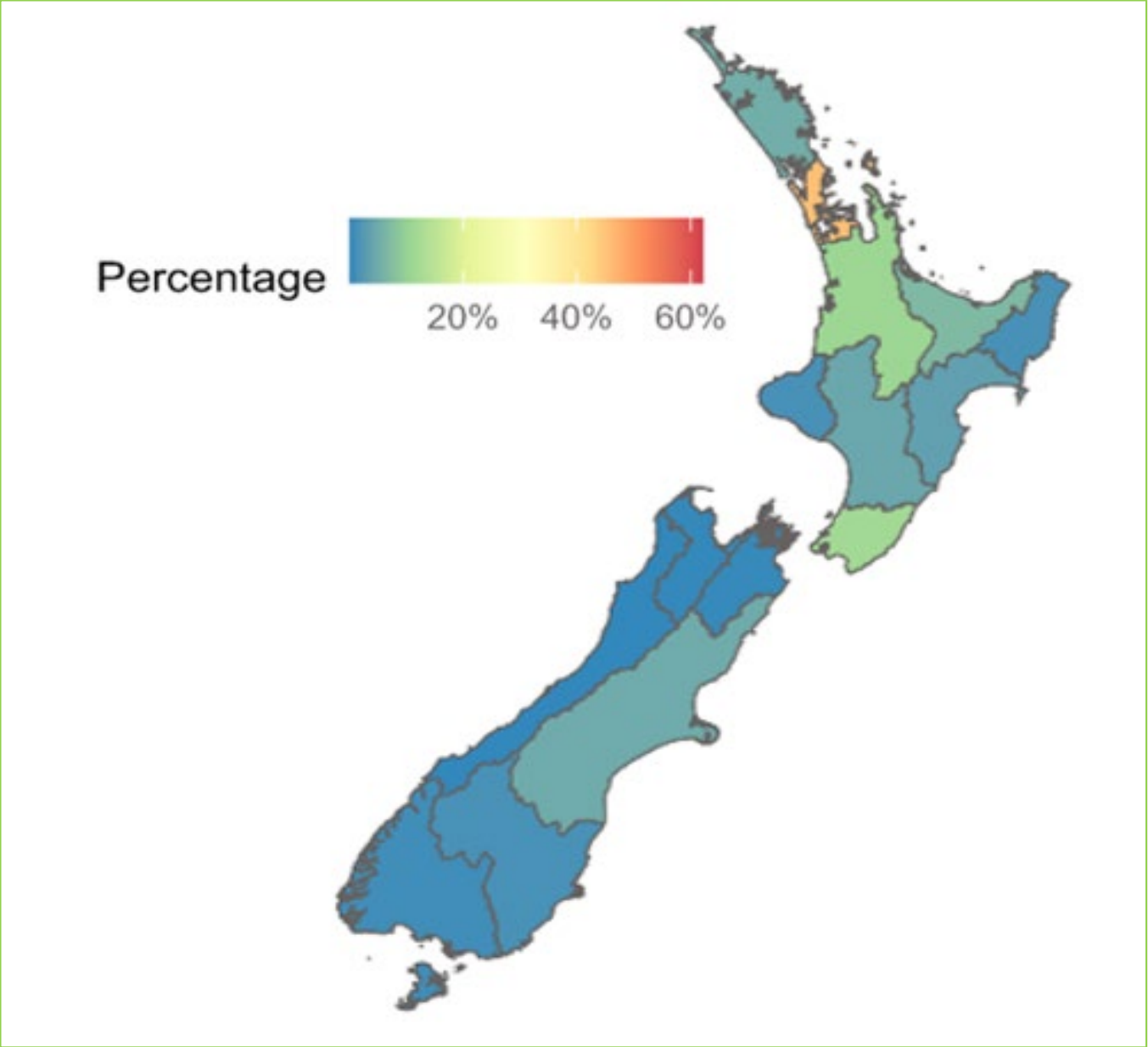
✦ Have a much younger age profile

Ethnic group	Median age (years)
Total New Zealand	38.1
Māori	26.8
Pacific peoples	24.9
Māori-Pacific peoples	15.3

✦ Most identify with four Pacific ethnic groups



✦ 46% live in Auckland



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RECOGNISING AND UNLOCKING MĀORI-PACIFIC POTENTIAL IN AOTEAROA

ACKNOWLEDGING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL



Employment & Economy

- Māori-Pacific peoples face higher unemployment and under-employment.
- Economic equity is key to intergenerational uplift.
- Consultation respondents called for targeted investment, and leadership pathways “for Māori, by Māori; for Pacific, by Pacific.”



Health & Wellbeing

- Māori-Pacific peoples experience higher rates of mental distress and barriers to care.
- Cultural identity is a protective factor for mental health.
- Inclusive, culturally safe services are needed—especially for intersectional groups.



Education

- Number of Māori-Pacific learners is growing.
- Academic outcomes are improving.
- Better outcomes and sense of identity when experience safe, inclusive, culturally grounded education.
- Consultation respondents called for more inclusive teaching of histories and heritage languages, and more Māori and Pacific teachers.



Housing & Community

- Many face rental insecurity, crowding, and poor housing.
- Multigenerational living offers cultural strength and language continuity.
- Stable, quality housing supports whānau wellbeing and resilience.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED?

- Recognising diversity within the Māori-Pacific population.
 - Everyone will bring different perspectives and experiences, not one-size-fits-all.
- Ensuring data systems reflect multi-ethnic realities.
 - Current government frameworks sometimes erase dual identities.
- Focusing on strengths.
 - Government must look beyond deficits to celebrate strengths and opportunities
- Enabling community-led innovation.
 - Support whānau-centred, culturally grounded, community-led solutions.
- Investing in culture, language, and identity.
 - Targeted investment can strengthen individual and collective identity.



Māori-Pacific peoples are central to the future prosperity of Aotearoa.

Future action by the government and others should embed this deeper understanding. By recognising and elevating Māori-Pacific identity as a strength, it uplifts not only a community — but the collective wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

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Disclaimer statement

- These results are not official statistics. They have been created for research purposes from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) which is carefully managed by Stats NZ. For more information about the IDI please visit <https://www.stats.govt.nz/integrated-data/>.
- Access to the data used in this study was provided by Stats NZ under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Data and Statistics Act 2022. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Stats NZ or individual data suppliers.