

Leo Moana o Aotearoa

Vosa VakaViti report



Ministry for
Pacific Peoples

Te Manatū mō ngā Iwi o te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa

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Executive summary

This report presents the findings from the survey and talanoa components of the Leo Moana o Aotearoa Project from kai Viti (people of Fijian heritage) in New Zealand. It is designed to be read with the [Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey Report](#), which describes the Leo Moana o Aotearoa Project and explains how the Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey was conducted, who was included, and how to interpret the results.

This report also features the voices of the Fijian community as captured through talanoa with its members across New Zealand. As part of these talanoa, Fijian community members answered questions about their attitudes towards vosa vakaViti (the Fijian language), language competency, and language use across multiple domains including the home, church, education, workplace, media and broadcasting, with the community, and in wider society.

High-level findings are as follows:

Language proficiency

Proficiency in vosa vakaViti was moderately high, with over three-quarters of participants reporting they could speak (82%), write (79%), understand when listening (84%), and read (84%) the language at least fairly well. This finding can be viewed with cautious optimism, as it contrasts with the sharp declines in proficiency reported across all categories in relation to other Pacific languages.

Vosa vakaViti in the home and with family

The home remains a vital space for vosa vakaViti, especially with elders. However, the use of vosa vakaViti at home with children varied. While 58.52% of participants reported always speaking the language with children aged 0–5 years, a smaller proportion reported doing so with older teenage children (13–18 years), likely due to the effects of English-medium schooling. Just over a third (36%) of participants reported currently living in a household where vosa vakaViti is the only language spoken.

Vosa vakaViti in church

Church remains a stronghold of language use and transmission for kai Viti, with over half of participants who attended weekly reporting that services (66%) and bible studies (54%) are held in vosa vakaViti. However, patterns of language use differed between age groups, however, with children being more likely to never use vosa vakaViti with one another in Church settings (31%) compared with adults (10%).

Vosa vakaViti in education settings

Formal opportunities to learn vosa vakaViti are limited, with less than one-fifth (35%) of participants having accessed Pacific language education in the past. This is in stark contrast to the demand for Pacific language education reported by participants with a large proportion expressing they would enrol their child(ren) in ECE (87%), primary (90%), and secondary (85%) schools where they could be taught in vosa vakaViti if such options were available.

Vosa vakaViti in the workplace

Vosa vakaViti is used informally among colleagues, especially where other Pacific peoples are present. However, a perception that English is the language of professional success remains prevalent, with over three-quarters (77%) of participants agreeing that 'knowing English is more important for getting a job in New Zealand than knowing Pacific languages'.

Vosa vakaViti in and with Pacific communities

Community was identified as an important domain for vosa vakaViti, with the vast majority of participants (97%) reporting they use the language at least sometimes when taking part in community events.

Vosa vakaViti in media and broadcasting

Digital technology, media, and the internet were identified as emerging domains where kai Viti can connect and converse in vosa vakaViti. Music and social media were highlighted as being the most popular domains for engaging with the language. There were mixed perspectives around the potential for these domains to support vosa vakaViti – 87% of participants agreed that digital technology, media, and the internet help them connect with the language, while 50% viewed them as a threat, reflecting concerns about language change and loss.

Vosa vakaViti in the New Zealand context

Vosa vakaViti is seen as integral to New Zealand's identity, with strong support for bilingualism. However, use in public services and government settings remains low, pointing to systemic barriers and the need for greater institutional support.

Introduction

“Language is our identity and that of our ancestors [...] who have gone before us” Vosa vakaViti.

Vosa vakaViti

is a cornerstone of Fijian culture, heritage, and identity. Fiji is linguistically diverse, with many dialects spoken across its 110 inhabited islands. While vosa vakaViti remains widely spoken in Fiji, it is classified as potentially endangered by UNESCO. This status responds to the precipitous rise in English use across the Pacific, often at the expense of indigenous languages, and the risk of language loss this poses, particularly among diaspora communities.

New Zealand and Fiji share a long-standing relationship, strengthened through such partnerships as the Fiji National Development Plan and the Duavata Partnership Agreement. These collaborations reflect a shared commitment to a thriving Pacific region where languages, including vosa vakaViti, can flourish.

According to the 2023 Census, the Fijian community is the fifth largest Pacific group in New Zealand with a population of 24,210. Language proficiency is unevenly distributed, however, with only 7% of New Zealand-born kai Viti reporting they are able to speak vosa vakaViti, compared to 38% of those born overseas. This highlights the urgent need to support language planning, maintenance, and revitalisation efforts.

Purpose and objectives

The Leo Moana o Aotearoa project aims to investigate the use of, and attitudes towards, Pacific languages in New Zealand. This report provides contemporary insights into the vitality of vosa vakaViti among kai Viti residing in New Zealand.

Complementing the initial [Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey Report](#), this document focusses specifically on vosa vakaViti and the experiences of kai Viti and Fijian communities across New Zealand. It presents the perspectives of survey (n = 276) and talanoa (n = 18) participants, exploring their use of and attitudes towards the language across various domains.

The findings aim to inform current and future efforts to strengthen vosa vakaViti and enhance the wellbeing of kai Viti in Aotearoa. This report also serves as a reference for communities, researchers, and agencies developing responsive policies and practices to better meet the needs of kai Viti.

Sample

The target population for the survey and talanoa is a representative sample of the kai Viti population, according to data from the 2018 Census (see Appendix 2 for the Fijian sampling frame).

Due to ongoing limitations with the quality of Pacific data from the 2018 Census, the Statistics New Zealand (StatsNZ) standard of a random sample approach using stratified, multi-stage area designs based on Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) was not considered appropriate for the Survey. Current quantitative sampling methods are often not conducive to creating equitable data for smaller or disadvantaged population groups.

Considering this, the Survey sample uses both Maximum Variation purposeful sampling and community-based participant-driven recruitment strategies to identify participants across five variables: age, gender, ethnicity, region, and birthplace (see Appendix 1 for further details). These variables are critical for measuring the extent to which kai Viti can learn and use vosa vakaViti. Combining these helped ensure a level of representation of Pacific voices that more generic random sampling methodologies cannot produce.

Data collection

Data for Leo Moana o Aotearoa was collected through an online survey and targeted talanoa with Fijian community members across New Zealand. The survey questionnaire¹ was available primarily through a confidential link online. Participants were also able to seek support in completing the Survey via telephone or video calling services facilitated by Fijian community-based researchers.

This report presents findings from both the survey and talanoa components specific to the Fijian community. It is intended to be read alongside the [Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey Report](#), which outlines the full project methodology, including survey design, participant inclusion criteria, and guidance on interpreting results. This section focusses on methodological elements that are unique to the kai Viti component.

Data analysis

Overall response rate

A total of 3,039 people completed the Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey, 276 of whom were kai Viti. Respondents were adults aged 15 years and older currently residing in New Zealand who identified as Pacific peoples.

Survey weighting

After the data was collected, a post-stratification weighting was applied to adjust for groups that were over-represented (e.g., women, smaller ethnic communities, adults aged 25-44) and under-represented in the sample (e.g., men, larger ethnic communities, youth 15-24). A sampling frame based on the relevant population proportions was used to achieve this weighting and ensure that the sample was optimally representative of the latest adult (15+) Pacific population statistics. The sampling frame is included as Appendix 2.

The results for the kai Viti participant survey (n = 276) have been weighted against the total kai Viti population in New Zealand as at the 2018 Census. They are therefore representative of the total domestic kai Viti population. These are different from the total Leo Moana participant survey (n = 3,039) as mentioned above, which applies ethnicity prioritisation to weight nine of the Pacific ethnic groups within the overall Pacific population as at the 2018 Census.

¹ The full list of Survey questions is provided in the [Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey Report](#) (pp. 92-103).

Survey analyses

While most of this report focusses on descriptive statistics (providing percentages and counts), additional analyses have been run to examine differences within the kai Viti participant cohort. These analyses included a chi-square test of significance to determine if there were statistically significant differences in survey responses based on the following variables:

- Age groups (15-24 years vs. 25-54 years vs. 55+ years)
- Gender (Male vs. Female)
- Ethnicity (kai Viti only vs. Multi-Pacific vs. Multi-ethnic)²
- Region (Wellington vs. Auckland vs. Elsewhere)
- Birthplace (New Zealand-born vs. Overseas-born)

Only significant differences within the kai Viti population ($p < 0.05$) are presented in this report.

Pertinent insights from the talanoa component of Leo Moana o Aotearoa are also incorporated throughout the report

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings:

- Due to the small size of the Fijian population in New Zealand, a randomised sampling design was not feasible. Kai Viti who are not as involved in Pacific community activities are therefore less likely to be represented in this sample.
- The data is based on self-reporting, which may be subject to over-reporting or under-reporting of language use, proficiency, or attitudes.
- While weighting was applied to improve representativeness, the findings should still be interpreted with caution, particularly when generalising to the entire kai Viti population in New Zealand.

² 'Multi-Pacific' refers to when a participant has selected Fijian and any other Pacific ethnicit(ies) e.g., Fijian and Samoan.
'Multi-Ethnic' refers to when a participant has selected Fijian and any non-Pacific ethnicit(ies) e.g., Fijian and New Zealand European.

Demography

This section provides a demographic overview of the kai Viti participants in the Leo Moana o Aotearoa survey. Understanding age, gender, birthplace, and ethnic identity helps contextualise the findings and ensures the voices represented reflect the diversity within the Fijian community.

Who took part in the survey?

A total of 276 kai Viti participants took part in the Leo Moana o Aotearoa survey. According to 2018 Census, there were 14,139 kai Viti residing in Aotearoa New Zealand. This means that at the time of the survey, around 2% of the kai Viti population aged 15+ participated in the survey.

Figure 1 – Kai Viti participant summary

276

Fijian participants

Youth (15–24) made up the largest age group, representing 24% of participants, while 17% were aged 55+

23%
New Zealand born

29%
Multiple ethnicities

Identified as:

49%
Female

51%
Male

0.7%
Other

55%
Auckland

10%
Wellington

10%
Christchurch



Age and gender

Nearly a quarter of kai Viti participants (24%) were 15-24 years old, while 59% were 25-54 years old. The remaining proportion (17%) were aged 55 years or older. Gender was evenly distributed, with 49% of participants identifying as female, 51% identifying as male, and an additional 0.7% identifying as a gender beyond the binary.

Birthplace and region

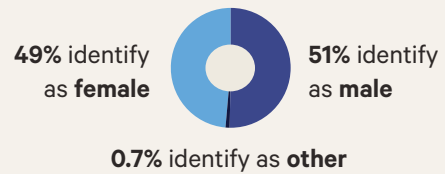
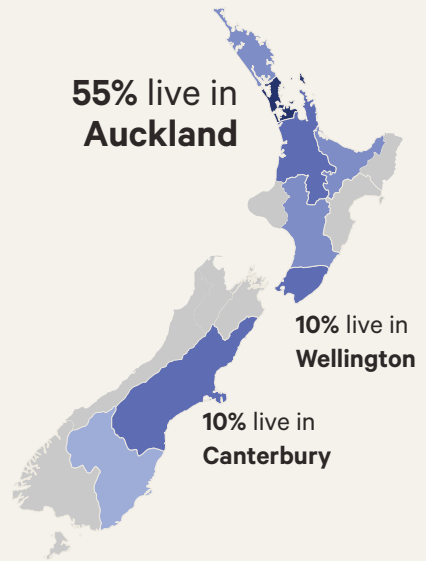
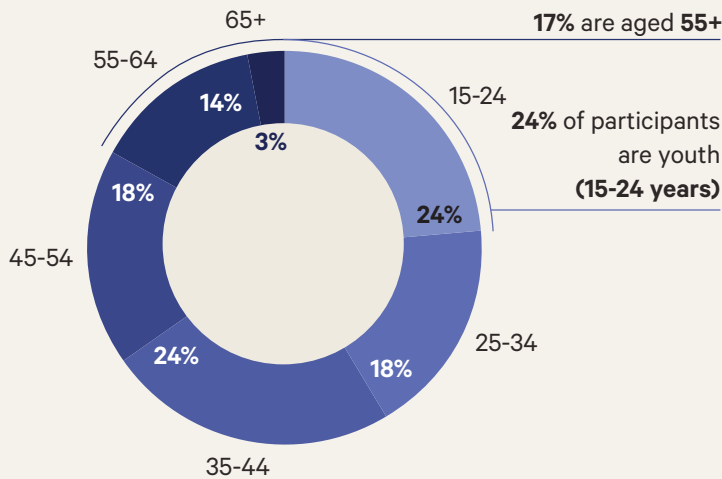
Over half (55%) of participants reported residing in Auckland and 10% lived in Wellington. A further 10% reported living in Canterbury, while the remaining 25% resided elsewhere. Under a quarter (23%) of participants reported being New Zealand-born and 77% were born overseas.

Ethnic identity

Over two-thirds (71%) of participants identified solely as kai Viti, while the remaining proportion (29%) identified as having at least one other ethnicity. The most common additional ethnicities of participants were Tongan (11%), Rotuman (8%), and Samoan (7%).

Survey Overview

276 Fijians took part in the Leo Moana o Aotearoa survey



23% were born in New Zealand

29% are multi-ethnic

Overview of Pacific language use in Aotearoa New Zealand

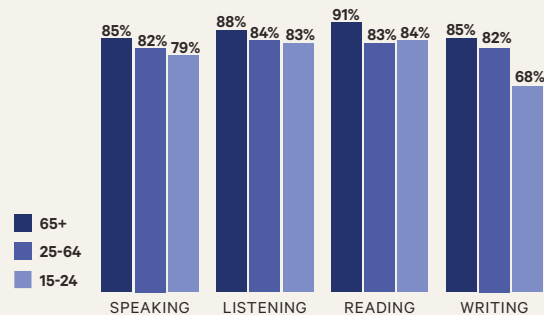
76% report being **proficient in at least one Pacific language.**

56% learned Vosa VakaViti as a **first language**

94% say using their heritage language is **important to their wellbeing**

77% are concerned Vosa VakaViti is **in danger of being lost in Aotearoa**

51% are concerned Vosa VakaViti is **in danger of being lost in Fiji**



Kai Viti rate their vosa vakaViti proficiency high across all language skills, except for younger participants who reported lower writing proficiency.

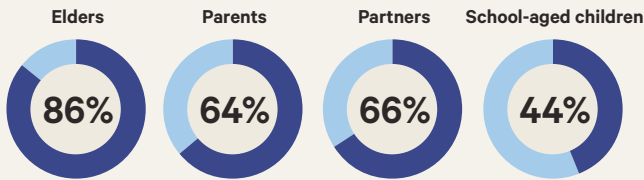
95% believe it is **important for our children and future generations** to speak our Pacific languages

64% **speak to children** in their households using **Pacific languages**

Vosa VakaViti use in Aotearoa New Zealand, in depth

Home & Family

Participants reported always using heritage languages with elders more than with peers and children.



25% live in **multigenerational households**

56% discuss **Pacific genealogies and family histories** at home.

89% agree that Pacific languages are safe as long as they are **spoken in the home**

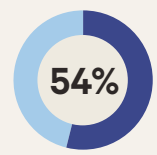
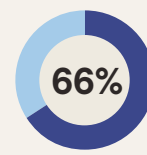
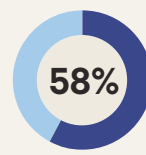
Religion

Top religious affiliations

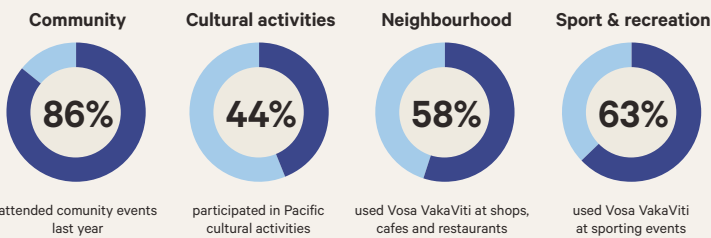
38% Methodist

13% Catholicism

24% Christian (no specific denomination)



Communities



attended community events last year

participated in Pacific cultural activities

used Vosa VakaViti at shops, cafes and restaurants

used Vosa VakaViti at sporting events

17% have never visited Fiji

88% have hosted Fijians in NZ

Media

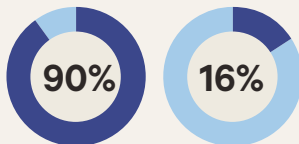
87% digital technology, media and the Internet **help connect** to Pacific languages

50% digital technology, media and the Internet **are threatening** Pacific languages

76% **listen to music in Pacific languages** every week

62% **send text messages and emails** using Vosa VakaViti every week

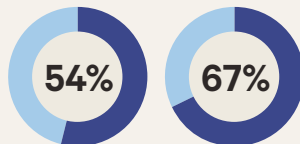
School



would send children to primary school where they could be taught Pacific languages

have attended Pacific language education in Aotearoa

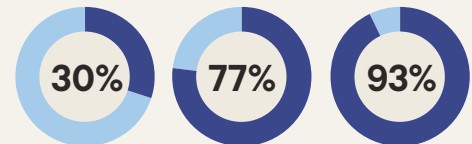
Work



have been asked to provide Pacific cultural advice in the workplace

feel comfortable using Pacific languages in the workplace

Government



believe the Government is not doing enough to support Pacific languages in NZ

agree Pacific languages should have official recognition in NZ

think Pacific languages are an important part of NZ's national identity

Enablers What activities are most helpful for Fijians to engage with Vosa VakaViti?

85% listening and speaking with family & friends

51% listening to music in Pacific languages

51% visiting heritage Pacific islands

49% talking with family and friends in the Pacific islands

Barriers What gets in the way of engaging with Vosa VakaViti?

32% not feeling connected to your Pacific culture or identity

30% not having consistent funding or resources to provide Pacific language programmes

28% feeling that Pacific languages are not valued in the workplace

26% Attending schools where very few Pacific people attend

Vosa vakaViti

“[Vosa vakaViti is] the language in which I can properly express myself; the language I am most comfortable using; the language I know and can claim as mine; the language that is my identity; the language that is my mother tongue; the language I will never forget.”

This section explores participants’ proficiency in vosa vakaViti, their experiences with language acquisition, and the role of language in shaping identity and culture. It also highlights concerns around language loss and the importance of intergenerational transmission

Figure 2 – Vosa vakaViti summary

95%

believe Pacific languages are important for future generations

64%

say using their heritage language is important to their wellbeing

Older generations report having better language proficiency than younger generations

76%

report being proficient in at least one Pacific language

64%

use Pacific languages when speaking to children at home

56%

learned Vosa Vakaviti as a first language

77%

fear Vosa Vakaviti is at risk in Aotearoa

51%

fear Vosa Vakaviti is at risk in Fiji



Proficiency in vosa vakaViti

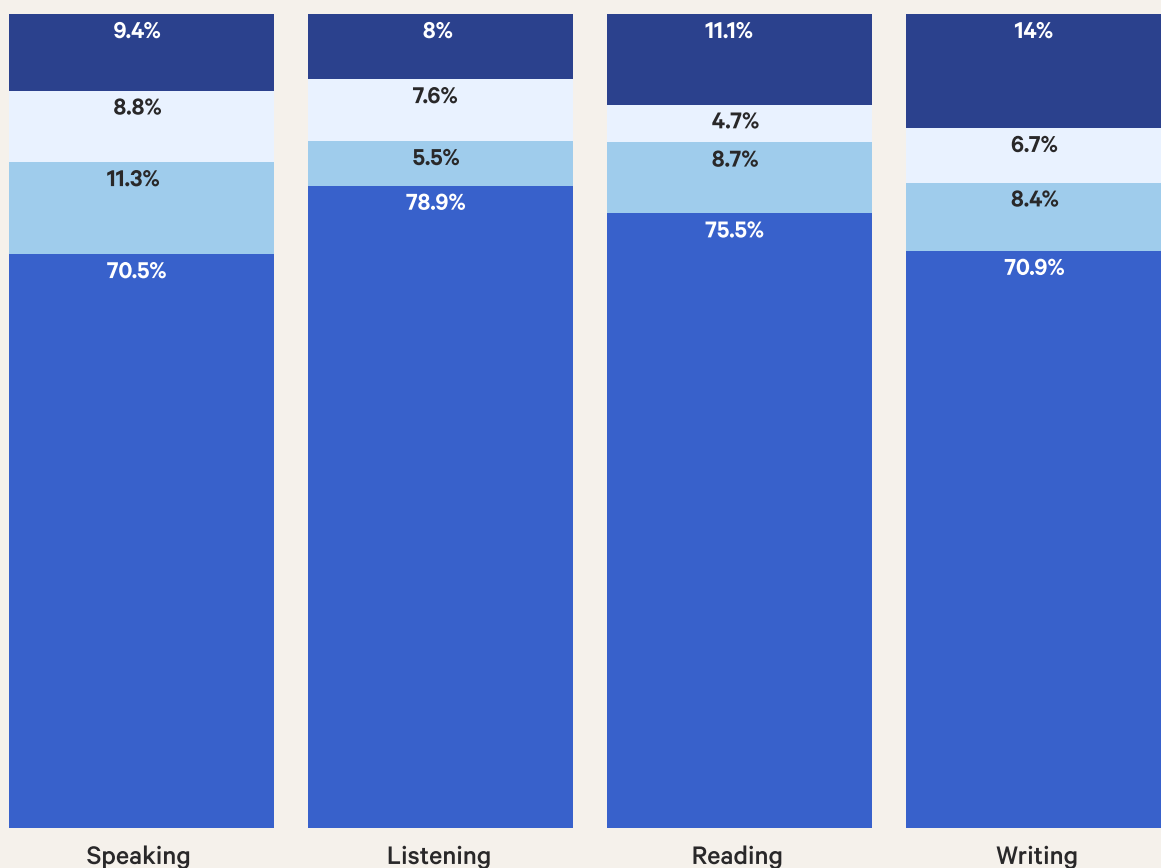
To capture language proficiency, participants were asked to self-rate their ability to speak, listen, read, and write in vosa vakaViti. A scale of ‘very well’, ‘well’, ‘fairly well’, ‘not so well’, and ‘only a few words or phrases’ was used, and participants who selected ‘very well’, ‘well’, or ‘fairly well’ were considered proficient for the purposes of the analysis in this report.

Over three-quarters (82%) of participants reported being able to speak vosa vakaViti proficiently, of which 71% could do so well or very well. A similar proportion (81%) reported being able to understand vosa vakaViti when spoken to them. Most (84%) reported being able to read the language, and 79% said they could write it at least fairly well. In fact, 12% of participants even chose to take the entire survey in vosa vakaViti!

Figure 3 – Proficiency in vosa vakaViti

Vosa Vakaviti Proficiency:

● Very well/well ● Fairly well ● Not so well ● Only a few words or phrases



Proficiency in other Pacific languages

Survey responses indicated high levels of multilingualism among participants. Over a quarter (29%) reported being familiar with te reo Māori, and 7% said the same for New Zealand Sign Language. The Pacific languages participants most reported being familiar with other than vosa vakaViti, were gagana Samoa (21%), lea faka-Tonga (20%), and fāeag Rotuam ta (14%).

Language acquisition

More than half (56%) of Fijian participants reported learning vosa vakaViti as a first language, while another 23% did so before starting school.

“I was brought up in our village and no language was used at our house other than the Fijian language. That was the first language I heard and learned. Even though the English language was introduced at school, Fijian was used daily.”

Language, identity, and culture

The significance of language was a strong recurring theme in kai Viti responses. Language is closely, deeply, and inextricably linked to culture and identity: it is a conduit for cultural norms and practices, a potent marker of identity, and a unique worldview that connects speakers to each other and the wider human experience.

“I once took my Fijian language for granted, but now I relish every opportunity to use it. Fiji’s rich culture and history is so deeply rooted in the language that I sometimes use certain words and expressions that are ancient without realising their etymology. Fijian words lend greater significance to every utterance – jokes are funnier, songs more beautiful, and stories are more engaging when expressed in my mother tongue. I love the openness of Fijian – it shapes my mentality, it is the language I use to think, to dream, to feel emotions... It is my inner voice.”

Vosa vakaViti was viewed extremely positively by participants and widely considered to be a significant part of Fijian identity and culture. Nearly all agreed that: they are proud to be (99%); vosa vakaViti is an important language (98%); vosa vakaViti is important for their wellbeing (94%); and the language that best connects them to their culture is vosa vakaViti (93%).

Figure 4 – Attitudes towards language, identity, and culture

Attitudes to Pacific heritage identity:

● Agree ● Not agree



Language loss

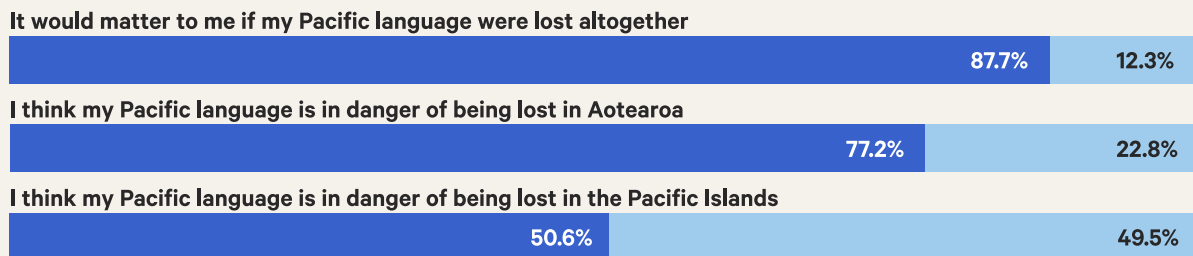
“My hairs stand on end when I hear about the decline of the Fijian language. When we look at the trend in New Zealand as well as in Fiji, we can see that the Fijian language is declining, and will die if nothing is done.”

Participants demonstrated a deep understanding and critical awareness of the endangerment of vosa vakaViti in both Fiji and the New Zealand diaspora. Nearly all participants (88%) agreed it would matter to them if vosa vakaViti were lost altogether. Over three-quarters (77%) believed vosa vakaViti is in danger of being lost in New Zealand, and 51% felt the same in relation to Fiji.

Figure 5 – Attitudes towards language loss

Attitudes to heritage language loss:

● Agree ● Not agree



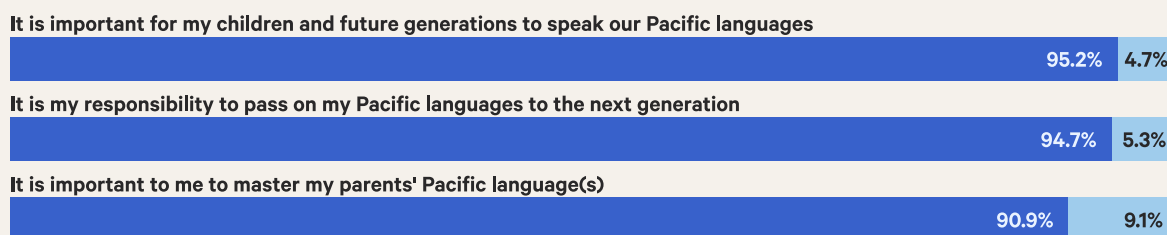
Intergenerational transmission

Nearly all participants (95%) agreed it is important for their children and future generations to speak vosa vakaViti, and that it is their responsibility to pass the language on to the next generation (95%). A slightly smaller proportion (91%) agreed it is important to master their parents' Pacific language(s).

Figure 6 – Attitudes towards language maintenance and transmission

Attitudes to heritage language maintenance:

● Agree ● Not agree



Participants believed that parents and families must impart Fijian language, culture, and customs to their children. In doing this, they honour the efforts of their forebears who have done the same.

“Yau Mareqeti, a treasured gift. My language reaffirms my indigenous Fijian identity and intangible cultural heritage. It had been handed down generation after generation from our ancestors.”



Vosa vakaViti in the home and with family

“I think it is absolutely important [that it] be taught. It should start at home. Every home needs to teach the Fijian language. I believe the Fijian language should be the only one used at home.”

The home is a foundational space for language transmission and cultural identity. This section explores how vosa vakaViti is used within households, how patterns have changed over time, and the role of family in maintaining the language.

Childhood household composition and language use

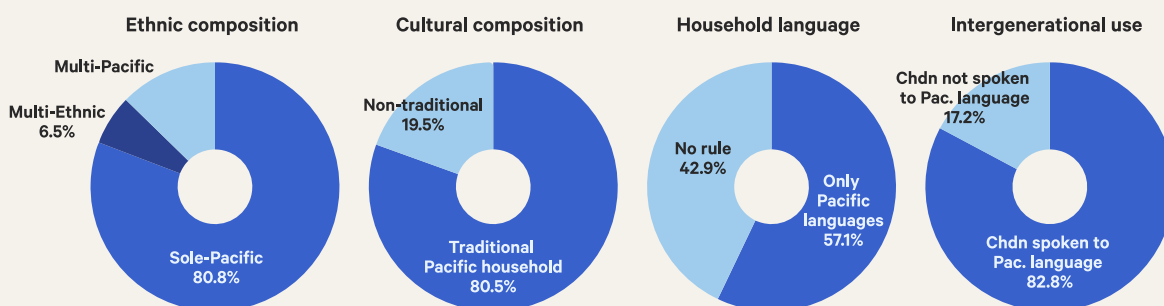
When asked about their childhood home, 81% of kai Viti participants reported growing up in a household with people of solely Fijian heritage. Of the remaining proportion, 13% reported growing up in a multi-Pacific household, and 7% did so in a multi-ethnic household.

Most (81%) participants reported their childhood home was traditionally Pacific, and 83% said that children were mostly spoken to in vosa vakaViti growing up. Just over half (57%) reported that their household had a rule where only vosa vakaViti could be spoken.

Many participants recounted personal experiences of growing up in bilingual or immersion households:

“When I grew up at home with my parents, I heard [...] only the Fijian language. [It was] the language in which I learned how to speak, the language I played with when I was small. I was brought up with my parents and the only language they used to talk to each other was Fijian.”

Figure 7 – Childhood household composition and language use



Contemporary household composition and language use

In the current day, a quarter (25%) of participants reported living in a multigenerational household. The most common household size was 2-4 other people (40%), followed by 5-6 other people (34%), and 7-8 people (12%).

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of participants reported that speaking to children in vosa vakaViti is common in their household, and 56% reported they had spent time discussing Pacific genealogies and/or family histories in the past year.

Figure 8 – Language activities in the home and with family

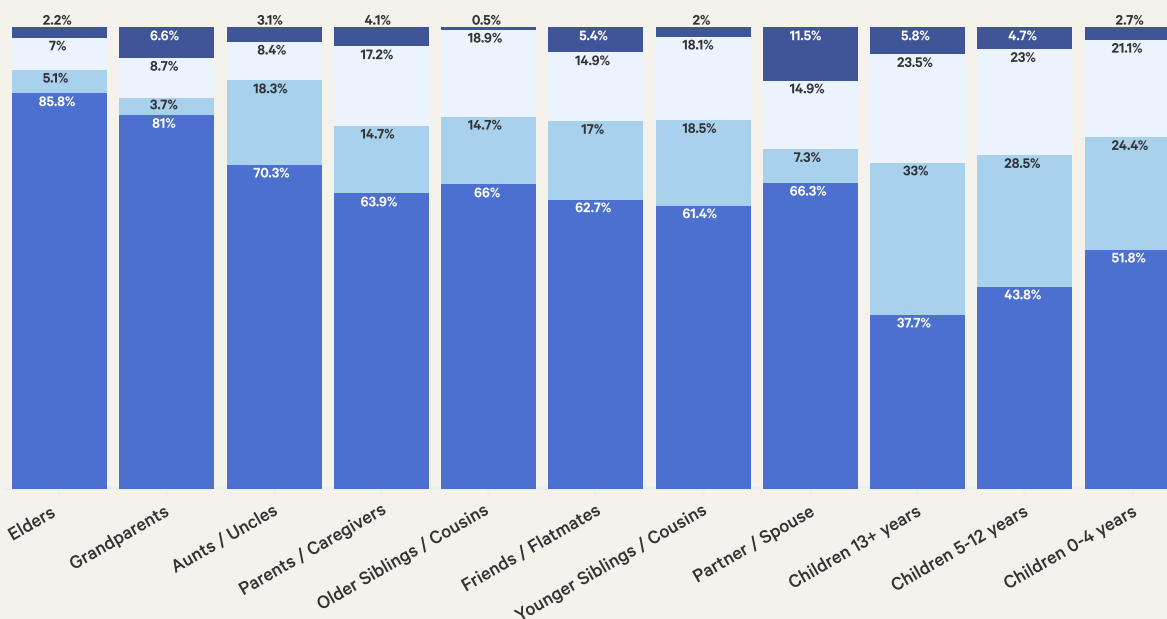


When asked how much of their communication in the home was conducted in their Pacific language(s) compared with English, almost all reported using vosa vakaViti at least sometimes with elders (98%), grandparents (93%), and aunts/uncles (97%). Participants were most likely to report *never* using vosa vakaViti with their partner/spouse (12%).

Figure 9 – Language use in the home and with family

Household Pacific language use compared to English:

● Always/Mostly ● Equally ● Sometimes ● Never

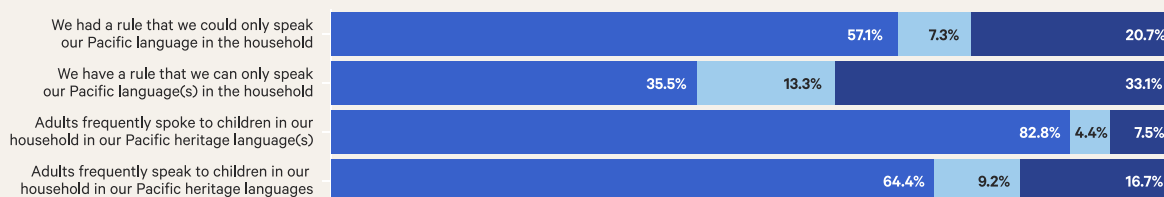


A key finding was that patterns of language use in Fijian households changed significantly over time. Specifically, when comparing their childhood and contemporary households, kai Viti participants were more likely to have grown up in a household with a rule that only vosa vakaViti could be spoken (57%) than currently live in a household with such a rule (36%). In the same vein, participants were more likely to have grown up in a household where adults frequently spoke in vosa vakaViti (83%) than live in one now (64%).

Figure 10 – Patterns of Pacific language use in the home and with family over time

Childhood vs current household language use

● Agree ● Neither agree nor disagree ● Disagree



Kai Viti participants shared how they believed the home is no longer the stronghold of vosa Vakaviti it once was, observing that more families seem to be speaking only English over time.

“[There] is a lack of care with vosa vakaViti in the home... It starts from the parents and is followed by their children. I see children who do not understand the language, nor can they read in Fijian. They will end up in a very sad situation if they do not know their language.”

There was a distinct drop in participants’ reported use of vosa vakaViti with children (categorised as aged 0-4 years, 5-12 years, or 13+ years) compared to other family members. Specifically, nearly a quarter (24%) of participants reported using vosa vakaViti sometimes or never with children aged 0-4. Results were similar with children aged 5-12 (28%) and 13+ (29%). This may reflect how English-medium schooling is affecting patterns of vosa vakaViti use in the home:

“I feel I am missing out by not being fluent in Fijian. I wish I were bilingual, but my mother didn’t speak to us when we were kids – she only spoke English. I think this was because it was prestigious to speak English, rather than a Pacific language. I am proud of my heritage, I feel I have missed out greatly on speaking, and now my own children have missed out too.”

Language use to reinforce identity

While family environments can be multilingual, many parents intentionally prioritise Fijian to reinforce its importance in terms of cultural identity.

*“Though our children speak both Fijian and English at home.
When they talk to us in English,
we respond in Fijian to emphasise the importance.”*

Faith and worship can support language use and transmission

Religious practices were identified as a meaningful way to reinforce both language use and cultural values in the home, serving as a powerful mechanism for language use and transmission.

*“During our evening devotions, we sing hymns, read the Bible, and pray
in Fijian. That helps our youngest child understand the language.”*

Attitudes towards Pacific language use in the home

*“Children should be brought up with their mother tongue:
with their language. Let us not rush in trying to use the
English language because there is sufficient time for that in school.
The Fijian language should be taught and used at home.”*

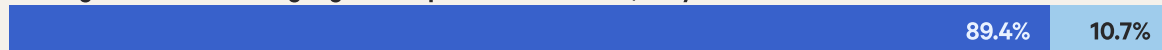
When asked about the condition of vosa vakaViti, 89% agreed the language is safe as long as it is spoken in the home. Less than one-third (31%), however, believed vosa vakaViti is *only* important in the home.

Figure 11 – Attitudes towards Pacific languages in the home

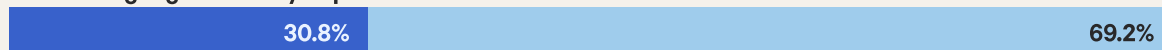
Attitudes to Pacific languages at home:

● Agree ● Not agree

As long as our Pacific languages are spoken in the home, they are safe



Pacific languages are only important at home



There was widespread concern that without deliberate action, vosa vakaViti will be lost among younger generations.

“Some families in Fiji speak English at home. I see children who do not understand or read Fijian. They will end up in a troubling situation.”

Parents are seen as key agents in language preservation. Their consistent use of vosa vakaViti sets the tone for intergenerational transmission.

“It is critical for us parents to speak in Fijian to our children and with correct pronunciations for them to hear.”



Vosa vakaViti in church

“The Church has a role in preserving and encouraging the use of the Fijian language. The Church is our new village here – it brings us together”.

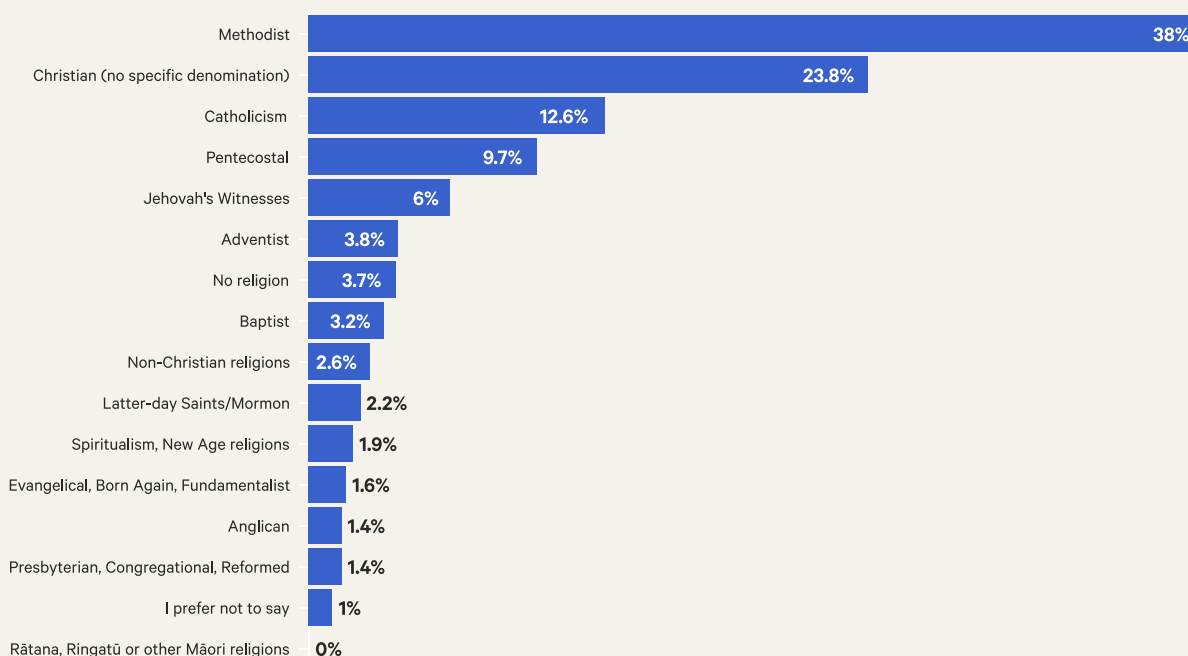
Churches play a central role in the lives of many kai Viti and are key spaces for language use and transmission. This section examines how vosa vakaViti is used in religious settings and the attitudes of participants towards its spiritual significance.

Religious affiliations and church attendance

Participants were asked to report their religious affiliation(s) and could select as many options as were relevant to them. Over one-third (38%) identified as Methodist, and around a quarter (24%) selected Christian (no specific denomination). Smaller proportions identified as Catholic (13%), Pentecostal (10%), and Jehovah’s Witness (6%).

Most participants (95%) reported having at least one religious affiliation, while only a very small proportion (4%) reported none. Over three-quarters (85%) reported they attended church at least occasionally, while more than half (58%) said they do so on a weekly basis.

Figure 12 – Religious affiliations among kai Viti



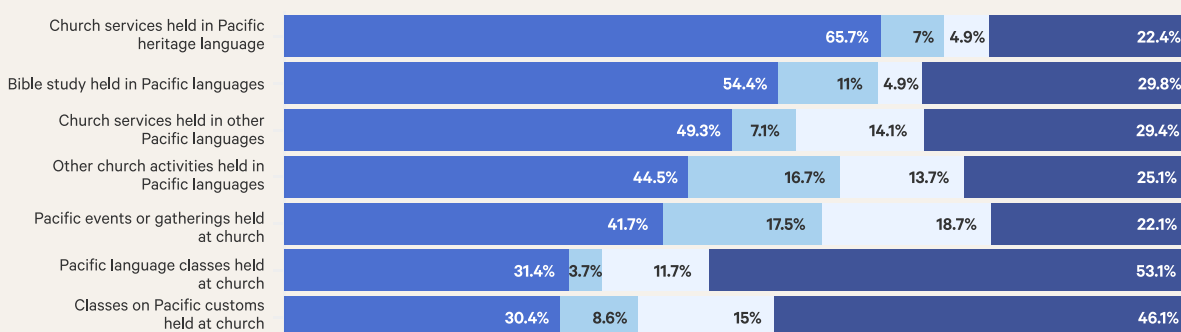
Pacific language use in church

Two-thirds (66%) of participants who attended church weekly reported that services were held in vosa vakaViti, and over half (54%) reported bible study was conducted in the language as well. Most (71%) reported their church services were held in a Pacific language(s) other than vosa vakaViti at least sometimes.

Figure 13 – Pacific language use during church services and activities

Church Pacific Language Connection:

● Weekly ● Monthly ● Occasionally ● Never



Beyond worship, church-affiliated groups were viewed as key platforms for promoting and sustaining vosa vakaViti.

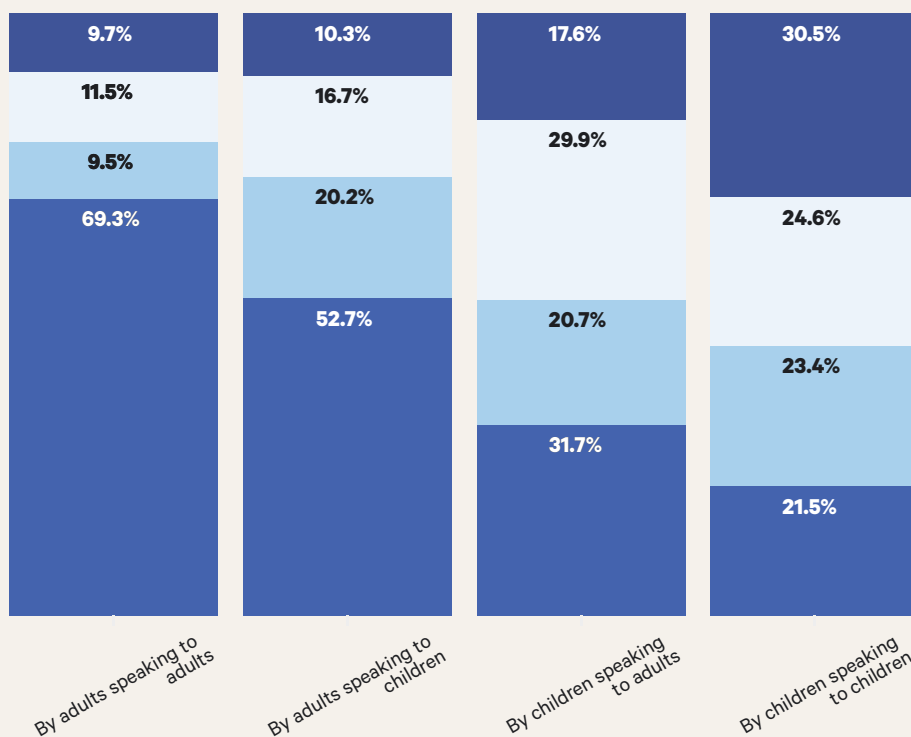
“Church groups and Sunday school have an important role in the preservation of the Fijian language.”

There were significant differences between how people communicated with adults compared to children at church. Over two-thirds of participants (69%) reported hearing adults use vosa vakaViti with other adults always or mostly, while only 32% reported hearing children do the same with adults. Over half (53%) reported hearing adults use vosa vakaViti with children most of the time, while only 22% reported hearing children use it with each other as frequently.

Figure 14 – Pacific language use at church between adults and children

Church Pacific language use compared to English:

● Always/Mostly ● Equally ● Sometimes ● Never



Participants observed that the same pattern of growing English use in the home plays out in church, with many noting that faith leaders face mounting pressure to deliver sermons in the language for the benefit of children who do not speak vosa vakaViti:

“At our Church, there was a time when [...] sermons were going to be in English, but our elders advised we should have them in Fijian so our children benefit from it. If we go with the trend and allow only English to be important, then a time will come when the Fijian language is lost.”

Some participants identified this as a problematic trend, and further emphasised how the church’s role in supporting vosa Vakaviti is crucial to its ongoing maintenance and revitalisation in New Zealand.

“I want to reconfirm the Church’s support in reviving, protecting, and promoting the Fijian language. Though some of us were born here and may have children [...] who do not know the Fijian language, the Methodist Church is steadfast in its support.”

Attitudes towards Pacific languages in church

“I fervently believe the Fijian language is a gift from God. I further believe that when we fail to use the Fijian language, we are failing in our duty to appreciate and honour God.”

The Fijian language is deeply tied to spiritual practice, with many expressing that prayer and worship feel more authentic in their mother tongue. Most participants (93%) agreed that vosa vakaViti is a gift from God, and that speaking the language is a way of honouring that gift, and by extension its giver, throughout life.

“I pray with the Fijian language in my mind. Even when I pray in English, the thoughts are always based on the Fijian language.”

Over two-thirds (72%) reported that their church is attended by many kai Viti. Over three-quarters (77%) reported feeling comfortable using vosa vakaViti at church, though 22% agreed the language is only important in that setting.

Figure 15 – Attitudes towards Pacific languages in church

Attitudes to Pacific languages at church:

● Agree ● Not agree





Vosa vakaViti in education settings

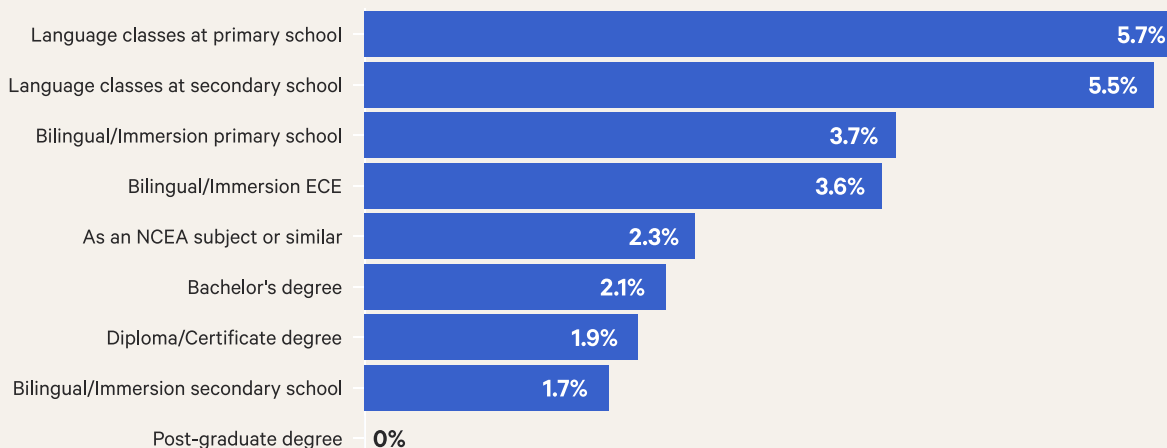
*“It is possible [that] the Fijian language can be lost or die...
There’s this underlying belief in our minds that only English is important
at school when learning, looking for jobs and everyday life.”*

Education is critical to language learning and use. This section explores participants’ experiences with Pacific language education, their attitudes towards bilingual schooling, and the perceived importance of English in academic success.

Pacific language education experiences

Only a small proportion (16%) of kai Viti participants reported having engaged in some form of Pacific language education in New Zealand. Of this proportion, the most common forms were language classes at primary school (6%) and secondary school (6%), followed by bilingual or immersion primary education (4%) and bilingual or immersion early childhood education (4%).

Figure 16 – Kai Viti participation in Pacific language education



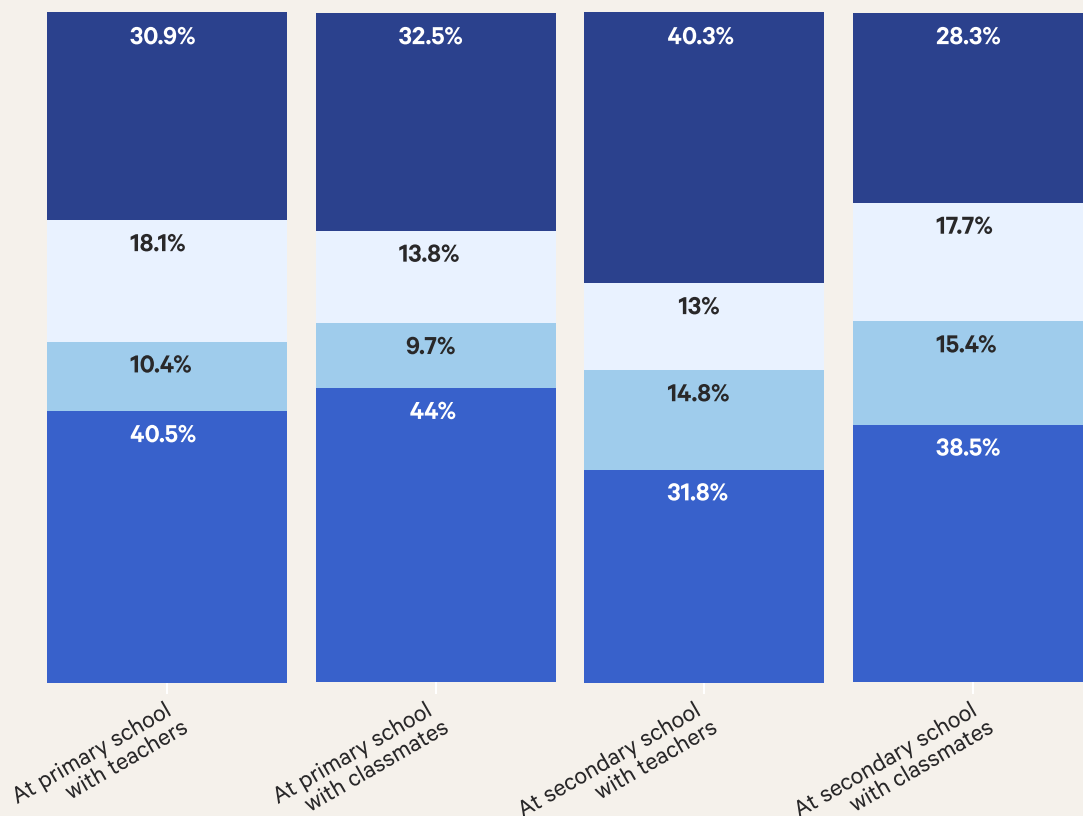
Pacific language use in schools

Participants’ use of vosa vakaViti in education was moderate compared to other settings. When asked how often conversations were conducted in vosa vakaViti at primary school, around two-thirds reported they used the language at least sometimes with teachers (69%) and classmates (68%). The results were more varied at secondary school, with a smaller proportion of participants reporting using the language at least sometimes with teachers (60%) compared to classmates (72%).

Figure 17 – Pacific language use at primary and secondary schools

Pacific language use at NZ schools compared to English:

● Always/Mostly ● Equally ● Sometimes ● Never



Participants also reflected on the impact of English-medium schooling on their children’s use of vosa vakaViti, as well as the vitality of the language more broadly.

“Children spend fewer hours at home than school. They hear English used consistently during those school hours and are therefore more attracted to the language. They will be more inclined to the English language when they come home than to vosa vakaViti.”

Attitudes towards Pacific languages in education

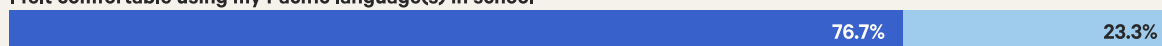
Over half of participants (60%) agreed that Pacific languages should be made compulsory in New Zealand primary schools, and 77% felt comfortable using their language(s) in school. Less than one-fifth (19%) agreed with the statement ‘in Aotearoa, you don’t need to learn your Pacific languages: English is enough’.

Figure 18 – Attitudes towards Pacific languages in schools

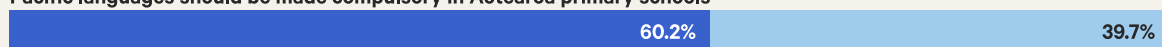
Attitudes to Pacific languages in NZ schools:

● Agree ● Not agree

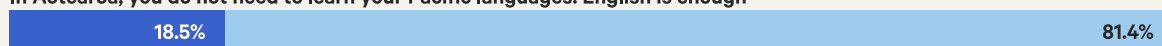
I felt comfortable using my Pacific language(s) in school



Pacific languages should be made compulsory in Aotearoa primary schools



In Aotearoa, you do not need to learn your Pacific languages: English is enough



The perception that English is crucial for academic success

Many participants described school as a negative environment for learning and using vosa vakaViti. This was often attributed to the prevailing perception that proficiency in English is the only way to attain academic and, by extension, professional success in life. Participants highlighted that this mindset is embedded more firmly in Fiji than in New Zealand, likely due to the strict English-only policies enforced in schools there both historically and contemporarily.

“My son started to learn Fijian when he went to school in Fiji. The language is not so important in schools these days, however... Maybe because of the thinking that English is more important to learn.”

However, some participants rejected the perception that English is critical for academic success. Stressing that a foundation in one’s mother tongue is what lays the path to high achievement.

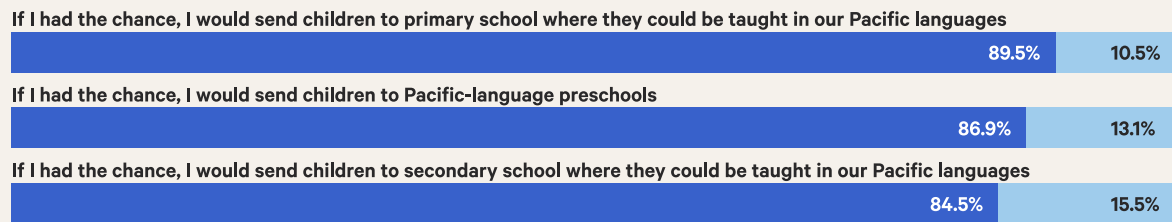
“My hope and aspiration is for Pacific languages to be part of school curriculum in primary and secondary education.”

High proportions of participants reported they would send their child(ren) to ECE (87%), primary (90%), and secondary schools (85%) where they could be taught in vosa vakaViti if given the opportunity.

Figure 19 – Attitudes towards Pacific language schooling opportunities

Attitudes to Pacific languages in NZ schools:

● Agree ● Not agree



“It might be worth considering including vosa vakaViti as an NZQA approved subject similar to the Samoan and Tongan. Knowing it would be useful in school – it could be a way of encouraging children to learn and understand the Fijian language.”



Vosa vakaViti in the workplace

“I am the only Fijian at my place of work so it’s difficult to speak the language. It is always in my mind though.”

Workplaces are increasingly diverse, and language use within them reflects broader societal attitudes. This section explores how vosa vakaViti is used in professional settings, as well as its barriers to and opportunities for inclusion.

Workplace experiences

When asked about their status in the labour market, over three-quarters (81%) of kai Viti participants reported they were currently engaged in paid work, while 9% were involved in some form of unpaid work. Only (16%) reported they had experienced ethnicity-based discrimination in the workplace.

Around one-third (32%) of participants reported they have worked and/or helped, volunteered, or worked without pay for a Pacific-focussed organisation, and 30% said that Pacific languages and cultures are visible at their workplace. Over one-fifth (21%) reported their workplace has dedicated Pacific cultural advisors on staff.

Figure 20 – Pacific language workplace experiences



Pacific language use in the workplace

The key factor that influenced participants’ use of vosa vakaViti in the workplace was whether they had colleagues, or dealt with clients, who also spoke the language. Over half (52%) reported they use vosa vakaViti with colleagues at least once a week, while 15% said they do so monthly or occasionally.

“I work with a number of Indians [...] from Fiji. There are also a few Samoans and Tongans that were educated in Fiji. I am pleasantly surprised when they greet me in Fijian. Some of them are even fluent. When they share their experiences in the Fijian language it makes me so happy.”

Many participants also commented on how far gestures, as modest as using the appropriate email greeting and sign-off, went towards making them feel comfortable, confident, and supported to express their language and culture in the professional environment.

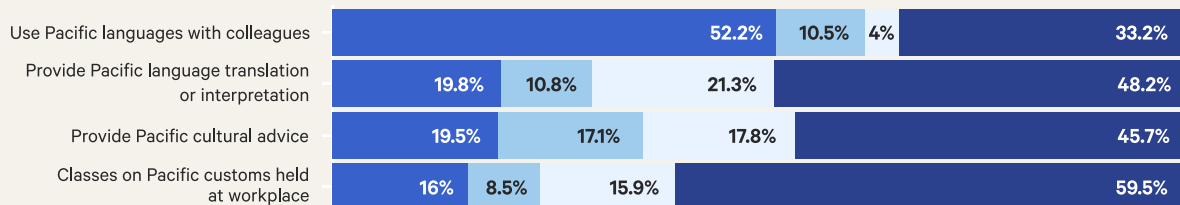
“During Fijian Language Week, our CEO’s emails began with a Fijian greeting and ended with ‘Vinaka vakalevu, Ni sa Moce’.”

Over half (54%) of participants reported that they have provided Pacific cultural advice in the workplace previously (even if not part of their job description), and a similar proportion (52%) reported they have specifically provided Pacific translation and/or interpretation support.

Figure 21 – Work-based Pacific language activities

Workplace Pacific Language Connection:

● Weekly ● Monthly ● Occasionally ● Never



Attitudes towards Pacific languages in the workplace

Over three-quarters (77%) of participants agreed with the statement ‘knowing English is more important for getting a job in Aotearoa than knowing Pacific languages’. This was echoed in the views shared by many participants around the prevailing perception that English is the language of professional success in New Zealand.

“We should not be discriminated against because we are Pacific Islanders. We should be able to speak our language freely in public and at work. It is a part of us, it is our identity.”



Vosa vakaViti in and with Pacific communities

“It is extremely important for us, in this generation, to continue to revive and protect the Fijian language. We’re concerned that those born here don’t know the language, and won’t know the language, and that in 5 to 10 years’ time it will decline to a very low level.”

Community events and gatherings are vibrant spaces for cultural expression and language use. This section looks at participants’ language patterns in community settings, as well as the importance of maintaining connections to Fiji.

Connection to Fiji

“My mother kept us connected to Fiji growing up – taking us home to Vanua Levu... We still travel to Fiji every year when borders are open. We have a home on the land my mother was born on.”

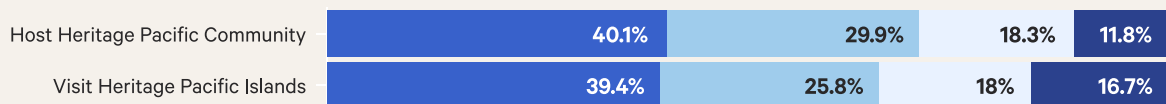
Participants were asked to indicate how frequently they visited Fiji and/or hosted community members from Fiji prior to COVID-19. The vast majority (88%) reported they had hosted community members at least once before, and 40% reported doing so at least once a year. Only 12% reported never having hosted community members from Fiji before.

Trends in how often participants visited Fiji were similar, with 39% reporting they visited at least once a year, and 26% reporting they visited every 2-3 years. The remaining proportion (35%) had visited Fiji one or twice or not at all

Figure 22 – Visiting and hosting community members from Fiji

Heritage Pacific Islands Connection:

● Once a year ● Every 2-3 years ● Once or twice ● Never



Language use in Fiji

Over three-quarters (80%) of participants indicated they always or mostly use vosa vakaViti when visiting and talking to people in Fiji. Only a very small proportion (6%) reported they never use the language in these contexts.

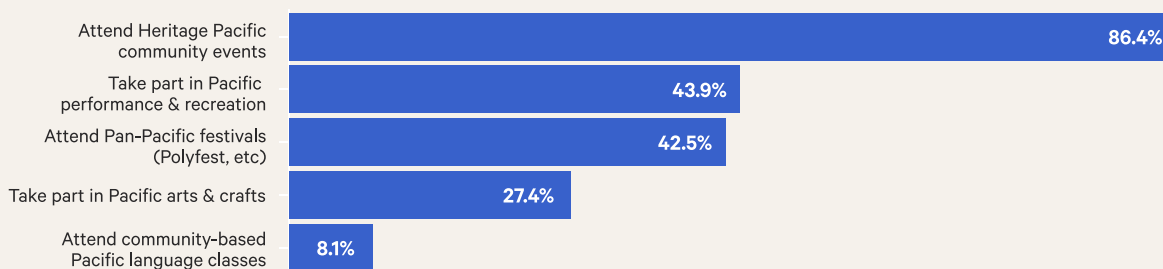
Language use in community settings

“We are delighted at get-togethers where people speak in Fijian.”

Community gatherings were identified as crucial for maintaining vosa vakaViti.

Participants were asked if they had engaged in any community events, initiatives, or activities in New Zealand in the past 12 months. The most common activities reported were Fijian community gatherings (86%), Pacific performance and recreation activities (44%), and Polyfest/ other pan-Pacific events (43%). Fewer participants reported taking part in arts and crafts activities (27%) and community-based language classes (8%).

Figure 23 – Engagement in community events, initiatives, and activities



Kai Viti participants were also asked about their attitudes towards Pacific cultural events. Most said they find such events easy to access (92%) and that they enjoyed participating in them (93%). A similar proportion (88%) reported they felt most comfortable in Pacific communities.

Figure 24 – Attitudes towards Pacific cultural events

Attitudes to Pacific languages with Pacific communities:

● Agree ● Not agree

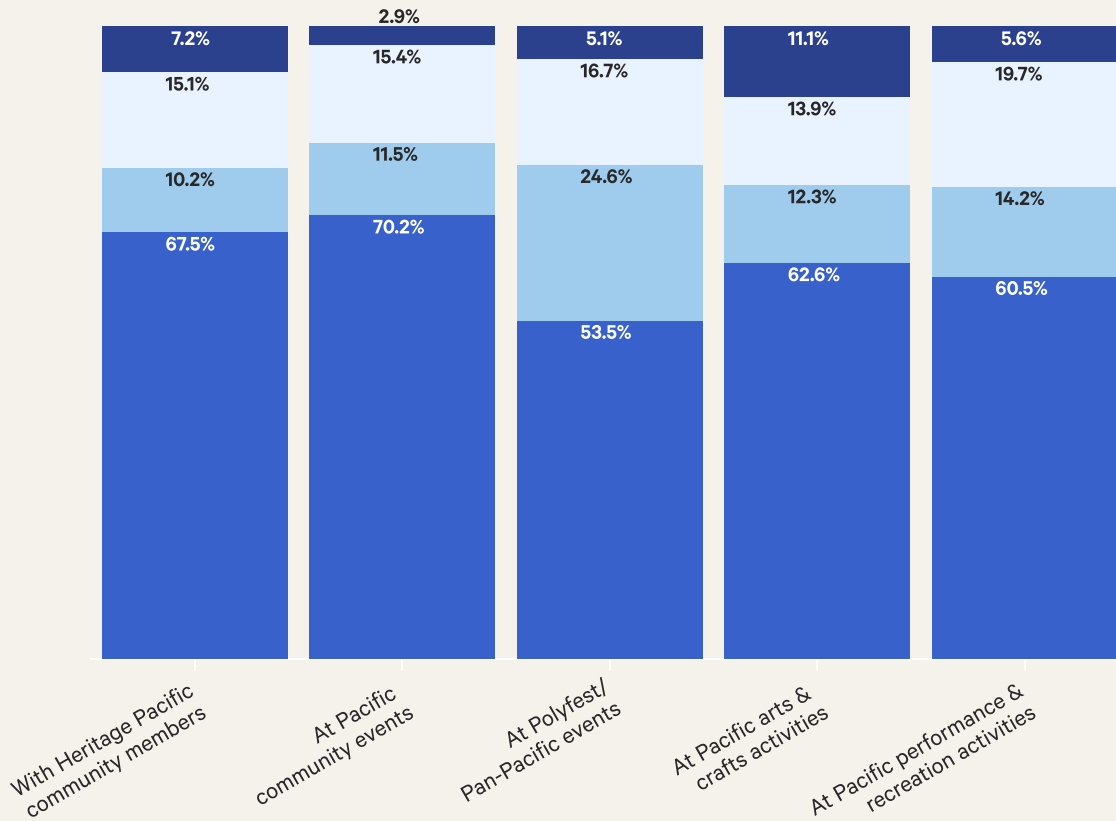


Nearly all participants reported using vosa vakaViti at least sometimes when taking part in Pacific community events (97%), Polyfest/other pan-Pacific events (95%), performance and recreation activities (94%), and arts and crafts activities (89%). The vast majority (93%) also reported using vosa vakaViti in conversation with Fijian community members more broadly.

Figure 25 – Pacific language use in community settings

Pacific community language use compared to English:

● Always/Mostly ● Equally ● Sometimes ● Never





Vosa vakaViti in media and broadcasting

“In the future, I want to see more promotion/advertising and national broadcasting in our Pasifika languages, more of our people as the faces on the news we watch etc.”

Digital platforms and media are powerful tools for language engagement, especially among younger generations. This section explores vosa vakaViti in music, social media, broadcasting, and creative arts.

Participants were specifically asked about media and broadcasting in Pacific languages, including which types of media they consumed and at what frequencies.

Music

Music is one of the most prominent forms of media that supports Pacific language use. Nearly all participants (95%) reported listening to Pacific music, and a similar proportion (93%) said they sing songs in Pacific languages at least occasionally.

Figure 26 – Engagement in Pacific music

Media Pacific Language Connection:

● Weekly ● Monthly ● Occasionally ● Never



Social media and telecommunications

Over three-quarters of participants reported using vosa vakaViti at least occasionally while on the phone (87%), sending texts, emails, or messages (81%), or using social media (79%). Smaller proportions reported using it at least weekly in the same contexts.

Figure 27 – Pacific language use over social media and telecommunications

Media Pacific Language Connection:

● Weekly ● Monthly ● Occasionally ● Never



Broadcast and print media

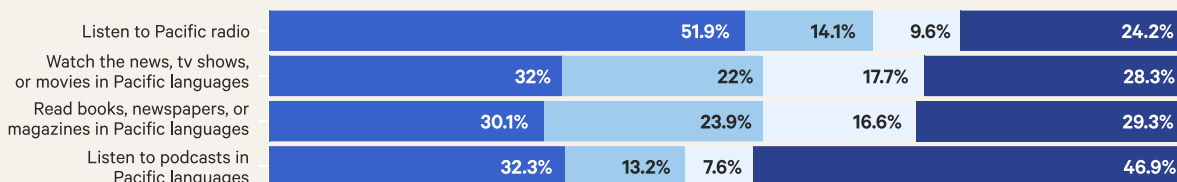
“I’m so happy that the Fijian language service continues to be aired on Radio 531. It is pleasing and encouraging to hear my language on the air.”

Radio was the most popular form of broadcast media for participants and remains a vital medium for language use, especially for older generations, with 76% listening to content in vosa vakaViti at least occasionally. This was followed by: watching the news, TV shows, or movies (72%); reading books, newspapers, or magazines (71%); and listening to podcasts (53%).

Figure 28 – Engagement in broadcast and print media

Media Pacific Language Connection:

● Weekly ● Monthly ● Occasionally ● Never



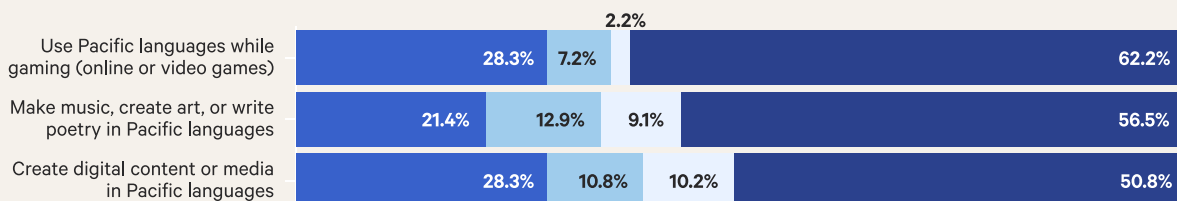
Creative arts

Just under half of participants (49%) reported creating digital content or media in vosa vakaViti at least occasionally, and 43% made music, created art, or wrote poetry as frequently. Over one-third (38%) reported using vosa vakaViti while gaming.

Figure 29 – Engagement in creative arts

Media Pacific Language Connection:

● Weekly ● Monthly ● Occasionally ● Never



Attitudes towards Pacific language media

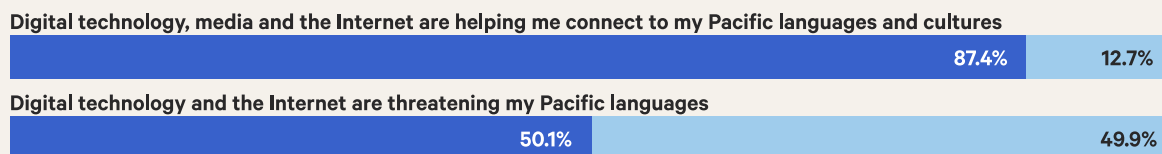
“Pasifika languages have been used in modes of broadcasting. The use of the Fijian language there is a form of recognition.”

Most participants (87%) agreed that digital technology, media, and the internet help them connect to their language(s) and culture(s). Half (50%) thought that digital technology and the internet are threatening vosa vakaViti.

Figure 30 – Attitudes towards Pacific language media

Attitudes to Pacific languages and media:

● Agree ● Not agree



The mixed views on whether digital technology is helping or harming vosa vakaViti were also reflected in participants' commentary, with some expressing concern that social media is facilitating changes in the language over time:

“When I hear mispronunciation of Fijian words, abbreviations, and slang, I believe they are influenced by the social media.”

Vosa vakaViti in the New Zealand context

“Because we are here (in NZ) and most things are in English, as soon as we leave our house, we are confronted with the English language. We can only speak Fijian when we are home or meet someone [...] Fijian. Otherwise, it’s English everywhere”

This section considers how vosa vakaViti is perceived and used in broader New Zealand society, including public spaces, service provision, and government engagement. It also reflects on the role of bilingualism and cultural identity.

Wider society

While almost all participants agreed that bilingualism is beneficial in New Zealand (95%) and that Pacific languages are an important part of New Zealand’s national identity (93%), they also emphasised that whatever value is placed on vosa vakaViti in New Zealand pales in comparison to that afforded to English. This prominence was a key theme raised by participants, with many expressing they rarely use vosa vakaViti outside of the home.

More than two-thirds (71%) agreed they feel comfortable using vosa vakaViti around non-Pacific people, and 78% believe it is important to learn foreign languages beyond English, demonstrating the value placed on multilingualism by kai Viti in New Zealand.

Figure 31 – Attitudes towards Pacific languages in wider society

Attitudes to Pacific languages and NZ society:

● Agree ● Not agree



Language, identity, and politeness dynamics

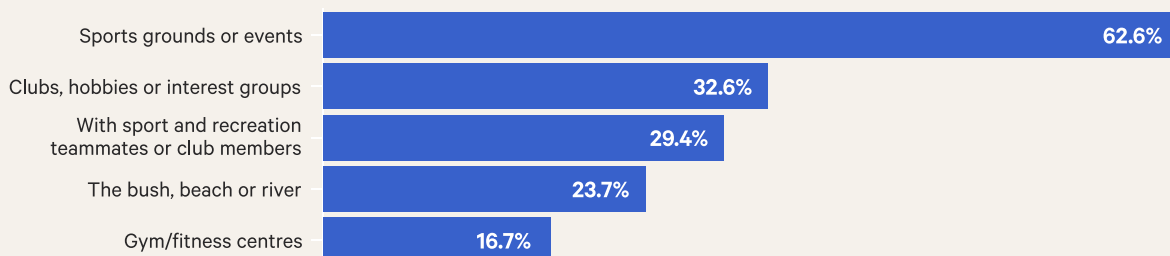
Most participants (89%) agreed it is important to speak your Pacific language(s) as a Pacific person. Over half (58%) felt it is impolite to use Pacific languages around people who do not understand them, while only 24% thought that if a person is not fluent in their Pacific language(s) they should not speak it at all.

I would have liked to be fluent in my Pacific language but I'm not and that's okay. It does not change the fact I am Pasifika. It's like a Vonu – a Vonu doesn't need to be told it's a Vonu, it just is. Language is a big part of a culture but it's not the be all and end all.

Language use in recreational settings

When asked where they had used vosa vakaViti in the past 12 months, many participants highlighted recreational settings. Specifically, 63% reported using the language at sporting events, while 33% reported the same in relation to clubs, hobbies, or interest groups.

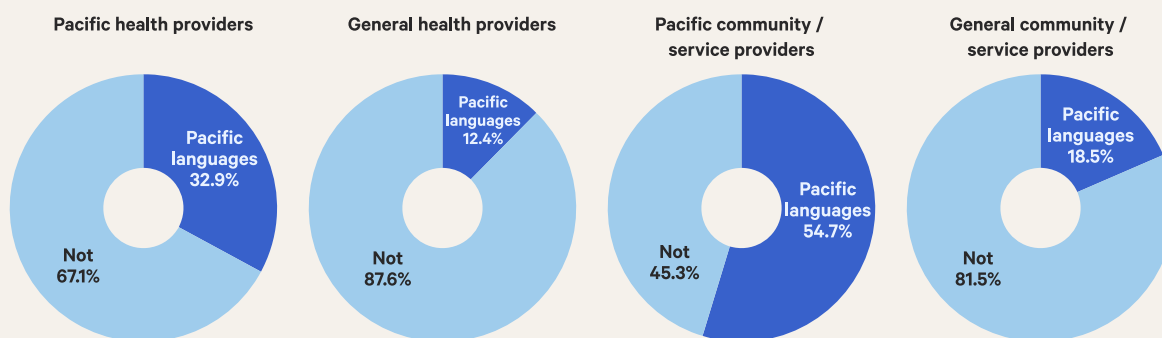
Figure 32 – Pacific language use in recreational settings



“The government should prioritise Pasifika languages because our people are the ones representing New Zealand around the world through sports and other organisations.”

Language use with service providers

Kai Viti were asked whether they had used vosa vakaViti when engaging with health and community service providers in the last year. A greater proportion reported they had used the language when engaging with Pacific health providers (33%) than general health providers (12%). Similarly, more participants reported they had used it with Pacific community services providers (55%) compared to general community service providers (19%).

Figure 33 – Pacific language use with health and community service providers

Participants emphasised how it is crucial that important information is provided in Pacific languages.

During COVID-19, I think the language saved our elders, and our youth. It helped us work together and communicate better because the situation was evolving so fast. I think, especially for youth and younger carers who needed to get elders confident and comfortable with everything that was happening, it was incredibly helpful.

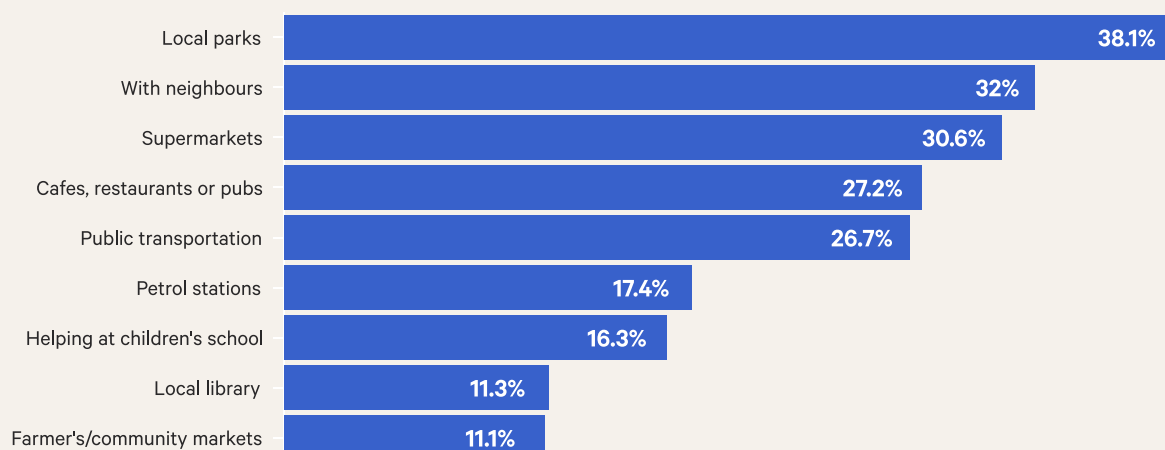
By Pacific, for Pacific services

Participants highlighted how important by Pacific, for Pacific services are to the physical, social, and cultural wellbeing of the community. The value of these, often grassroots, culturally-affirming offerings was emphasised, particularly in relation to health.

“It is always pleasing to read information about services [...] in the Fijian language. It brings a sense of relief and satisfaction that [...] we are cared for [...] It is also pleasing to meet health officials who can talanoa in Fijian. We feel at home and comfortable. It helps us explain our problem or sickness and what we need. There are some health centres that use Fijian, and they give [us] confidence and satisfaction. They make us feel comfortable and happy.”

Language use in public settings

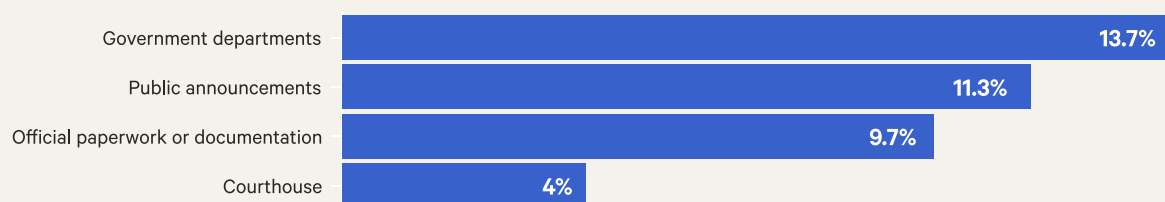
In terms of language use in public settings, over one-third (38%) of participants reported using vosa vakaViti at local parks. A smaller proportion (32%) reported use with neighbours, and response rates continued to decrease for supermarkets (31%), dining establishments (27%), and on public transportation (27%). The least likely places for participants to report using vosa vakaViti were at local libraries and community markets (11%).

Figure 34 – Pacific language use in public settings

New Zealand Government

“Beyond parents’ efforts at home, the Government should assist with programmes and activities that help maintain and revitalise our Pacific languages.”

Only 14% of participants reported using their language while engaging with the New Zealand Government. A smaller proportion (10%) reported using vosa vakaViti when completing official paperwork or documentation, and 4% reported the same in courthouse settings.

Figure 35 – Pacific language use in official and/or government settings

The Pacific Language Week Series was highlighted as a good example of a government initiative that supports Pacific languages in New Zealand. Moreover, it was clear that *any* vosa vakaViti content in public spaces was greatly appreciated by participants and, indeed, the wider Fijian community.

“It is really great that the New Zealand Government cares for our language. It is seen in places [...] we go and [in] the services that are explained in our language [...] When we go to places and are greeted in the Fijian language, we feel welcomed and it is really great.”

Attitudes towards Government support of Pacific languages

“I believe the Government is supporting our language, but it is up to us, the indigenous people of Fiji, to recognise and accept that we also have a responsibility. We are thankful to the Government for its care and support in protecting our language.”

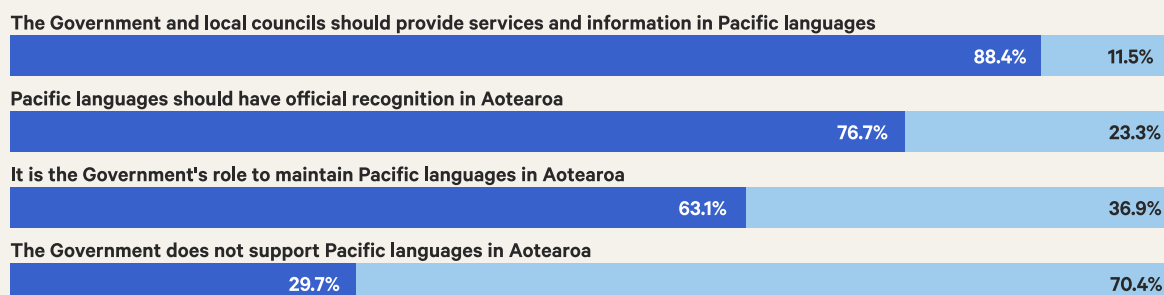
Participants were largely aligned in their attitudes towards the role Government plays in promoting Pacific language planning, maintenance, and revitalisation across the motu.

A large proportion (88%) felt that Government and local councils should provide services and information in Pacific languages, and 77% agreed that Pacific languages should have official recognition in New Zealand. Nearly two-thirds (63%) agreed it is the Government’s role to maintain Pacific languages, while 30% thought the Government *does not* support them.

Figure 36 – Attitudes towards Government support of Pacific languages

Attitudes to Pacific languages and NZ Government:

● Agree ● Not agree



“I really appreciate how the Ministry of Pacific Peoples continues to support the Pacific Language Weeks – long may this continue with further improvements that enable our communities to pass on our beautiful languages to the younger generations and non-Pacific people.”

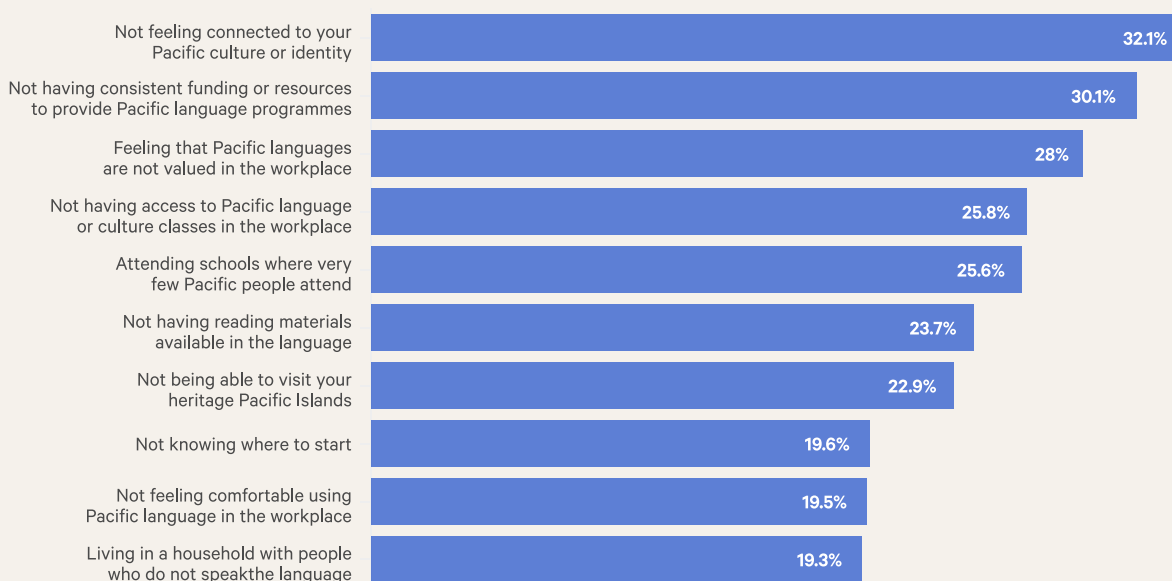
Barriers and enablers

Understanding what helps or hinders the use of vosa vakaViti is critical to effective language planning, maintenance, and revitalisation. This section presents the key barriers to and enablers of using, learning, and maintaining vosa vakaViti identified by kai Viti participants, offering insights into the lived realities that influence language trends in New Zealand. These findings can inform targeted interventions and community-led strategies to strengthen vosa vakaViti across generations.

Barriers to using, learning, and maintaining vosa vakaViti

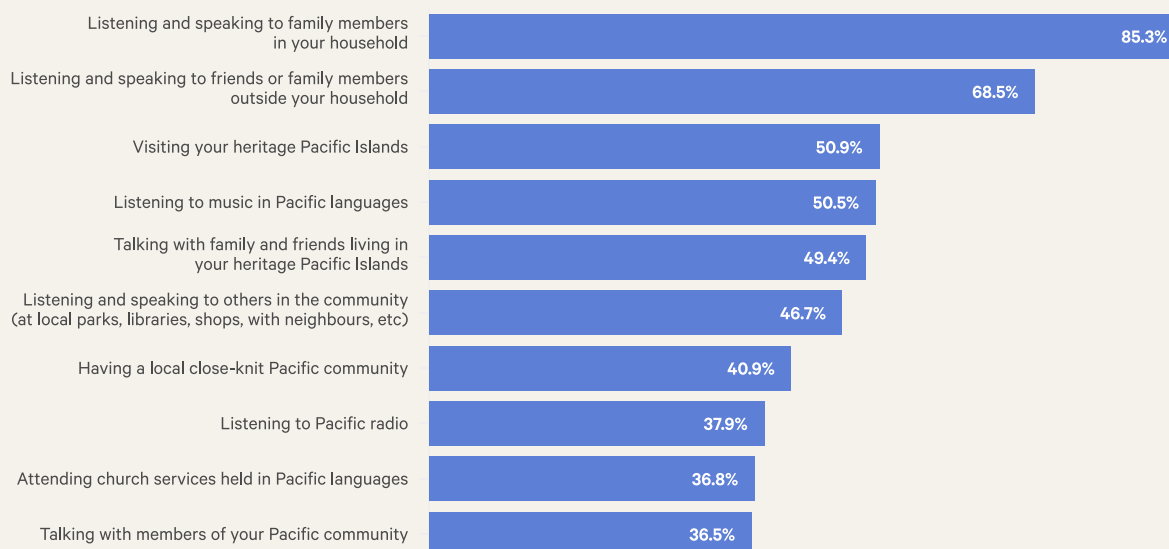
Participants identified a range of barriers that hinder their ability to use, learn, and maintain vosa vakaViti. The most reported of these was a sense of cultural disconnection, with nearly one-third (32%) reporting they did not feel connected to their Pacific identity. Institutional limitations were also prominent, including inconsistent funding for language programmes (30%) and lack of access to language classes in workplaces (26%). Many felt that Pacific languages were undervalued in professional settings (28%), and some experienced isolation in educational environments with few other Pacific students (26%). These barriers reflect both personal and systemic challenges that must be addressed to pave the way for successful language revitalisation.

Figure 37 – Ten most reported barriers to using, learning, and maintaining vosa vakaViti



Enablers of using, learning, and maintaining vosa vakaViti

Participants also identified a range of enablers that support their use and learning of vosa vakaViti. The most reported of these was speaking and listening to family members within the household (85%), underscoring the importance of intergenerational transmission. Relationships beyond the home also played a key role, with over two-thirds (69%) citing conversations with friends and extended family as helpful. Cultural connection through travel and media was also significant: over half of participants reported visiting Fiji (51%) and listening to music in vosa vakaViti (51%) to be beneficial. These findings highlight the importance of everyday interactions, cultural immersion, and creative expression in sustaining language.

Figure 38 – Ten most reported enablers of using, learning, and maintaining vosa vakaViti

Together, these barriers and enablers paint a nuanced picture of the language landscape for kai Viti in New Zealand. While systemic challenges persist, the family, community, and cultural pride offer powerful pathways to revitalisation. Addressing barriers while amplifying enablers will be key to ensuring vosa vakaViti thrives for future generations.

Conclusion

This *Leo Moana o Aotearoa Vosa VakaViti report* points to a critical moment for action. It highlights the deep emotional, cultural, and spiritual significance of vosa vakaViti to the Fijian community, as well as the concerning decline in its use across generations, particularly among New Zealand-born youth. The prominence of English in education and workplaces, combined with limited formal support for language learning, has contributed to this language shift. Vosa vakaViti is at a crossroads in New Zealand, and its survival depends on intentional, coordinated, and well-resourced efforts across families, communities, institutions, and government.

It is within this context that this report was developed. Alongside the overarching [Leo Moana o Aotearoa Report](#), it provides a snapshot of the current state vosa vakaViti, as seen through participants' use of and attitudes toward the language in New Zealand.

By exploring these critical dimensions of language vitality across a range of domains, the report offers an essential evidence base to inform responsive policy and practice that meets the needs of kai Viti both now and into the future.

To support the practical application of the report's findings, a series of priority areas for action are outlined below. Some are relevant across all Pacific languages covered in the Leo Moana reports, while others are specific to vosa vakaViti and kai Viti. These priorities are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive; rather, a diverse mix of interventions will be required to meaningfully address language decline.

Priority areas for action

Strengthen language use in the home and community

Though the home remains the most important domain for intergenerational transmission, use of vosa vakaViti within it, especially with children, is declining.

Recommendations:

- Promote family-based language plans and home immersion strategies.
- Support intergenerational programmes (e.g., storytelling, cooking, meke, crafts).
- Encourage parents to speak vosa vakaViti daily, not just during Fijian Language Week.
- Establish community hubs for regular talanoa and cultural practice.

Expand education pathways and resources

- There is strong demand for vosa vakaViti language education across all levels, but current offerings are fragmented and limited. Without continuous pathways, language learning is fragmented and less effective

Recommendations:

- Develop a language and culture curriculum with tiered levels (introductory to fluent).
- Establish vosa vakaViti ECE centres, playgroups, and after-school classes.
- Provide scholarships and training for vosa vakaViti language teachers.
- Embed vosa vakaViti in school curricula and Sunday school programmes.
- Create bilingual resources (books, posters, apps, dictionaries).

Support community-led initiatives and events

Community events are vibrant spaces that foster language use and cultural pride. However, younger adults often feel excluded from traditional activities.

Recommendations:

- Fund community-led workshops, festivals, and cultural days.
- Create targeted events for youth and young adults (e.g., dances, debates, cooking events).
- Recognise and support local leaders and knowledge holders.

Leverage digital platforms and media

Digital tools offer scalable and engaging ways to promote vosa vakaViti, especially among youth.

Recommendations:

- Develop vosa vakaViti online learning platforms and language apps.
- Create culturally-grounded media content (music, animations, podcasts).
- Partner with broadcasters to produce vosa vakaViti programming for children.
- Support digital storytelling and creative arts in vosa vakaViti.

Embed language in public services and workplaces

Participants expressed a desire to see vosa vakaViti used in health, education, and government services.

Recommendations:

- Provide Fijian language options for public-facing services.
- Teach service providers basic Fijian greetings and cultural protocols.
- Recognise Pacific languages as assets in workplace diversity and wellbeing.
- Encourage bilingual signage and communication in community spaces.

Appendix 1 – Survey variables

The Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey sample utilises both Maximum Variation purposeful sampling and community-based participant-driven recruitment strategies. This type of sampling used in tandem with a community-focussed research approach allows for a stratified method of identifying participants across the below variables which are key in terms of measuring the extent to which kai Viti can learn and use vosa vakaViti:

Pacific ethnicity – This variable relates to the ethnic group(s) a person identifies with or has a sense of belonging to. It measures cultural affiliation and enables analyses into language use by ethnicit(ies), which is a significant factor in language maintenance and/or attrition.

Age – Speakers are socialised to think and behave in certain ways and, consequently, language attitudes and use tend to vary based on age. When a language is learned also influences language use. This variable ensures questions can be asked around whether young people are acquiring Pacific languages and how proficient adult speakers are in them.

Gender – It is important to explore whether gender plays a role in terms of who is speaking Pacific languages, and if this influences intergenerational transmission. It is also important to explore whether there are attitudinal differences towards Pacific languages based on gender.

Region – Pacific communities are dispersed across New Zealand. Having opportunities to hear and speak their languages influences whether they can be maintained. It is therefore important to examine which people, in which regions, have access to and use their Pacific languages. Exploring language attitudes across the regions is also critical.

Birthplace – The domestic Pacific population is predominantly New Zealand-born, which undoubtedly influences Pacific language use and attitudes. This variable therefore enables the analysis of any differences between New Zealand-born and overseas-born Pacific populations' use of and attitudes towards Pacific languages.

Appendix 2 – Survey sampling frame

The sampling frame has been designed using data from the 2018 Census. While this was known to be under-representative of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, it nonetheless forms the necessary foundation of the research in this report prior to the release of the complete results for 2023 Census.

Target Fijian Survey sample

This table reflects the target Fijian sample for the Leo Moana o Aotearoa Survey.

Total	234	
Northern Regions		
NZ-BORN	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)
15-24 years	8	8
25-44 years	15	14
45-64 years	8	8
65+ years	2	3
OVERSEAS-BORN	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)
15-24 years	11	11
25-44 years	22	20
45-64 years	11	12
65+ years	3	4
Central Regions		
NZ-BORN	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)
15-24 years	2	2
25-44 years	4	4
45-64 years	2	2
65+ years	1	1
OVERSEAS-BORN	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)
15-24 years	3	3
25-44 years	6	6
45-64 years	3	3
65+ years	1	1
Southern Regions		
NZ-BORN	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)
15-24 years	1	1
25-44 years	3	3
45-64 years	2	2
65+ years	0	1
OVERSEAS-BORN	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)
15-24 years	2	2
25-44 years	4	4
45-64 years	2	2
65+ years	1	0

Final Survey sample

The following table reflects the final Survey sample.

Total	276		
	MALE (#)	FEMALE (#)	ANOTHER GENDER (#)
	140	134	2
NZ-BORN	36	25	1
OVERSEAS-BORN	99	114	1
15-24 years	34	31	1
25-44 years	59	56	
45-64 years	44	42	1
65+ years	3	5	
Northern regions	95	93	2
Central regions	27	24	
Southern regions	17	18	



Ministry for
Pacific Peoples

Te Manatū mō ngā Iwi o te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa

