

On the demography of Pacific people in New Zealand

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An expanded version of a keynote address
by the Government Statistician, Len Cook, at the
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Introduction¹

This paper is an expanded version of a keynote address given by the Government Statistician, Len Cook, at the Pacific Vision Conference held in Auckland in late-July 1999. The primary aim of this address was to provide demographic background for the conference, where the main thrust was to look at the directions being taken by Pacific people in New Zealand into the next century, using the motif “Navigating the Currents of the Next Millennium”. This paper outlines the contemporary demographic situation of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, including the historical context, drawing attention to significant changes that are taking place in composition and the underlying dynamics. The final section reviews the future demographic prospects, drawing on the 1996-base population projections produced by Statistics New Zealand, and looks at the potential consequences both for New Zealand and for people of Pacific ethnicities.

Demographically, Pacific people in New Zealand are characterised by high fertility, rapid miscegenation, a high population growth rate and a youthful population, generally characteristic of developing nations. Their current age structure - a legacy of past trends in fertility, mortality and migration - has a strong in-built momentum for further growth in the new century. Despite inevitable population ageing and the likely drop in fertility, their age structure, even half a century on, will remain more youthful than the current New Zealand structure, and this could have direct implications for the labour market dynamics and New Zealand society as a whole.

It is important, at the outset, to state what is meant by Pacific people. This paper draws largely on information provided in the Census of Population and Dwellings by people who have indicated that at least one of their ethnicities is a Pacific ethnicity. This is a self-identified socio-cultural characteristic, independent of ancestry or nationality. Ethnicity can change at any time as a result of changes in environment and an individual may identify equally or in differing degrees with several ethnicities. Thus, it includes all people who gave any Pacific ethnicity regardless of birthplace or ancestry. There are two exceptions to this. Firstly, the Household Labour Force Survey data uses an older prioritised system of categorising ethnic responses, which means that any Pacific people who also stated that they were of Māori ethnicity are not covered. Secondly, ethnicity is not collected in migration records, so in this case Pacific people are defined according to country of last permanent residence.

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The growth of a community

People of Pacific ethnicities have a relatively recent demographic history in New Zealand. Half a century ago, at the 1945 Census of Population and Dwellings, there were just over 2,000 people who were recorded as being of Pacific origin. At that stage the total population of New Zealand was 1.7 million people. Thus the Pacific community accounted for just over one-tenth of 1 percent of the total population of this country. Over the next quarter of a century, this proportion increased steadily to 2 percent, with the population passing the 50,000 mark just after the 1971 Census.

This was followed by a period of high immigration in the early 1970s with the inflow being largely dominated by young adults. This inflow slowed somewhat in the late 1970s, as social, economic and labour market conditions in New Zealand became less favourable for people from the Pacific basin. In the early 1980s, the flow even reversed as the return migration to the Pacific region and chain migration to Australia taken together exceeded immigration from the region. Immigration recovered towards the end of the decade. By the 1996 Census, the number of Pacific people in New Zealand had grown to more than 202,000 and made up nearly 6 percent of the total resident population.

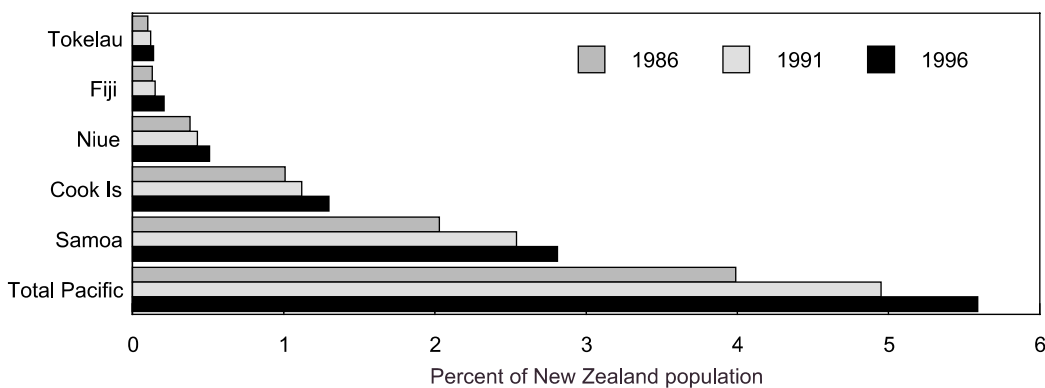
Dynamics of population growth

Despite limited gains from migration, a high rate of growth continues to be experienced by people of Pacific ethnicities. Since the late 1970s, the combined effect of natural increase (the excess of births over deaths) and inter-ethnic mobility has effectively contributed more than 80 percent of the total growth. Largely because this is a young population with relatively low rates of mortality and higher rates of fertility, natural increase (excess of births over deaths) is currently adding almost 7,000 to New Zealand's Pacific population each year. This equates to an annual natural rate of population growth of 3.3 percent, which is over three times the total population's natural growth rate of 1.0 percent.

Many of the island populations are small, and growth of the communities in New Zealand has been rapid. This was seen most dramatically with the Tokelauans who, as a result of a major storm in Tokelau in 1966, were almost all rescued and resettled in New Zealand. In the early 1970s, first the Niuean and then the Cook Island communities in New Zealand exceeded the size of their "home island" populations, with a consequential redefining of their geographic perspective (Hau'ofa, 1994).

Figure 1

People of Pacific Ethnicities in New Zealand, 1986-1996



An analysis of the components of the Pacific population in New Zealand shows (see Figure 1) that all of the major Pacific ethnicities have consistently increased their share of the New Zealand population across the last three censuses. This suggests that the growth rate of not only the Pacific population as a whole is higher than that of the total New Zealand population, but the rate of growth for each ethnicity within this group is also higher. Around half of all people of Pacific ethnicities are of Samoan ethnicity.

To some extent, the migration spurt in the early 1970s, despite the later set-backs, served to kick-start the development of the Pacific population in New Zealand. However, the continued growth has come primarily from the locally born people, because since the late 1970s less than one-fifth of the growth is directly attributable to immigration.

Table 1

**Pacific People by Ethnicity in New Zealand and Estimated 1997
"Home" Island Population**

Ethnicity	1996 Census	"Home" Population
Samoan	101,754	171,000
Cook Islands	47,019	19,000
Tongan	31,389	97,800
Niuean	18,474	2,080
Fijian	7,895	796,000
Tokelauan	4,917	1,000
Total Pacific population living in New Zealand, 1996 Census	202,233	

Source: 1996 Census, ESCAP 1998 Yearbook.

One of the constraints on the Pacific population to continue to derive growth from migration can be seen by comparing the size of the populations in New Zealand with those in the Pacific (Table 1). The data contained in the table above suggests that the pool of potential migration from external sources is limited and the relative sizes of the populations outside New Zealand suggest that net losses rather than gains may occur for a number of the countries involved, barring natural catastrophes such as that experienced by Tokelau in the late 1960s.

It can be seen from Table 2 that, for almost all island groups, immigration has had a small effect on the growth of the resident New Zealand population since 1980, with a total net gain from the Pacific over the last 21 years of less than 1,200 people per year (including a significant number of people of Indian ethnicity from Fijian). Among the Pacific groups, immigration had the largest effect on the Samoan population, accounting for about one-third of the total Pacific net migration in the last two decades.

Table 2

Net Migration Gain to New Zealand by Country of Last/Next Permanent Residence, Selected Pacific Countries, 1979-1999

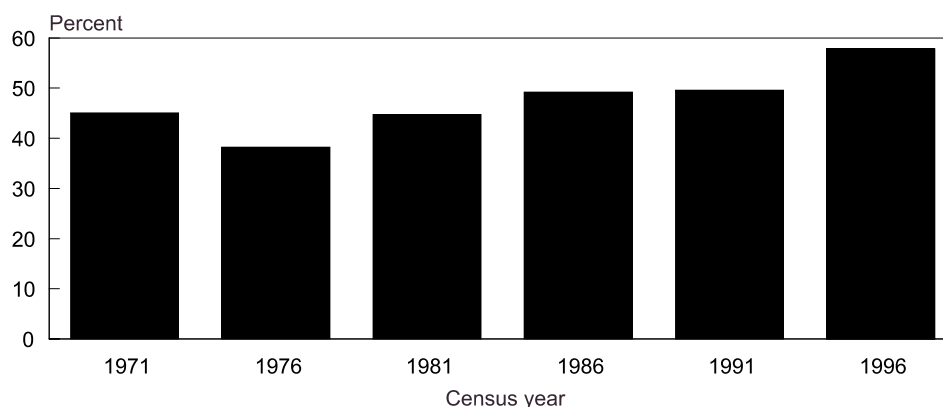
March Year	Cook Islands	Fiji ⁽¹⁾	Niue	Tokelau	Tonga	Samoa	Total
1979							-1,516
1980							-676
1981	63	-1	42	16	-123	104	-577
1982	242	278	85	3	-79	194	195
1983	107	271	45	-41	-95	396	713
1984	-33	287	63	-2	70	486	1,122
1985	118	409	16	-31	94	872	1,423
1986	92	293	34	6	0	744	1,071
1987	200	582	92	-8	131	1,126	2,137
1988	160	1,925	82	-18	71	985	3,298
1989	-39	1,958	49	29	42	948	2,896
1990	-61	1,519	39	31	-33	105	1,494
1991	-60	848	3	53	-101	229	1,170
1992	-365	430	22	9	-395	-754	-1,157
1993	-282	528	30	0	-87	-492	-197
1994	-136	581	15	13	33	13	678
1995	13	864	3	40	159	566	1,986
1996	231	1,001	33	39	140	1,165	3,063
1997	568	1,180	62	17	276	1,016	3,388
1998	410	993	44	25	186	611	2,468
1999	244	974	56	-29	224	615	2,108
Total	1,472	14,920	815	152	513	8,929	25,087

(1) Fiji data includes people of Indian ethnicity.

In sum, the trend towards smaller immigration gains is reflected in the rise in the proportion of New Zealand-born people who are of at least one Pacific ethnicity. In 1971, 45 percent of Pacific peoples living in New Zealand were New Zealand born, but by 1976 this had fallen to 40 percent as immigration increased sharply. Since then this percentage has steadily risen again as net migration rates have fallen and fertility has remained high in a relatively young population. By 1996, 58 percent were New Zealand born (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Pacific Population in New Zealand: Proportion New Zealand born, 1971-1996



High fertility and miscegenation

The rapid growth in Pacific population over the last quarter century is attributable increasingly to high fertility of Pacific women and rapid miscegenation of the Pacific population. A cross-tabulation of the ethnicities of parents and the ethnicities of babies born to these parents provides compelling evidence of the level of miscegenation (Table 3).

Table 3

Live Births by Multiple Ethnicity of Parents and Children, Year Ended December 1997

	Ethnicity of Mother				Total
	Pacific Only	Pacific and Other	Non-Pacific	Not Specified	
Pacific only Father					
Pacific only Child	3,345	41	73	11	3,470
Pacific and others Child	23	221	973	1	1,218
Non-Pacific Child	11	2	71	0	84
Not Specified	4	0	1	0	5
Total	3,383	264	1,118	12	4,777
Pacific and others Father					
Pacific only Child	48	9	0	0	57
Pacific and others Child	88	128	537	0	753
Non-Pacific Child	1	5	87	1	94
Not Specified	0	1	1	0	2
Total	137	143	625	1	906
Non-Pacific Father					
Pacific only Child	62	4	7	1	74
Pacific and others Child	498	496	46	0	1,040
Non-Pacific Child	48	100	45,656	59	45,863
Not Specified	1	1	33	7	42
Total	609	601	45,742	67	47,019
Not Specified Father					
Pacific only Child	587	3	9	3	602
Pacific and others Child	67	142	173	0	382
Non-Pacific Child	10	16	3,826	24	3,876
Not Specified	4	0	7	31	42
Total	668	161	4,015	58	4,902
Total					
Pacific only Child	4,042	57	89	15	4,203
Pacific and others Child	676	987	1,729	1	3,393
Non-Pacific Child	70	123	49,640	84	49,917
Not Specified	9	2	42	38	91
Total	4,797	1,169	51,500	138	57,604

At birth, there is a much closer relationship between the ethnicities of parents and newborn children than there is as the children age and they make their own identification of ethnicity. Nevertheless, birth data shows that three-quarters of newborn babies with at least one parent of a Pacific ethnicity have a Pacific mother. The other quarter derive their Pacific ethnicity solely from their father. Thus paternity also plays an important role in Pacific population growth in New Zealand.

The level of miscegenation is apparent in the fact that 54 percent of 7,596 newborn children of Pacific ethnicities have multiple ethnicity and 42 percent have at least one non-Pacific ethnicity. There are a number of factors driving this, notably inter-marriage between members of various ethnicities.

In addition to those children who are recorded as having Pacific ethnicity, there are a further 400 or so children, born of at least one parent of Pacific ethnicity, who are recorded at birth as having no Pacific ethnicity. While this may not appear to be a large number, it is more than 5 percent of the total number of those babies who were recorded as having Pacific ethnicity. This is likely to become an important factor in the demography of Pacific people in the future. At this stage, it is unclear from the data what the dynamics of this phenomenon are - it may indicate problems in reporting or it may mean that parents have made a conscious choice to reject Pacific ethnicity on behalf of their child, just as there are babies recorded with Pacific ethnicity when the recorded parent(s) are not of Pacific ethnicity. This may also be influenced by the ethnicity of the biological father, who may be not recorded or be different from the recorded father.

Table 4

**Total Fertility Rates – Pacific Ethnicities,
Year Ended September 1996**

Ethnicity	Total Fertility Rate ⁽¹⁾
Samoan	3.3
Cook Islands	3.1
Tongan	4.4
Niuean	2.4
Tokelauan	2.9
Fijian	2.1
Other Pacific	3.1
Total Pacific	3.3
NZ Māori	2.7
Total New Zealand	2.0

(1) Total fertility rate gives the average number of births a woman would have during her reproductive life if she were exposed to the fertility rates experienced in this year.

Total fertility rates for the various Pacific groups vary considerably (Table 4), from an average of less than two and a half births per woman for women of Niuean and Fijian ethnicity to almost four and a half for Tongans. People of Samoan and Cook Islands ethnicities approach the average for women of Pacific ethnicity. These are all above the theoretical “replacement level” (taken as 2.1 births per woman) - required for a population to replace itself in the long run, without migration - and above the New Zealand average of about two children per woman.

Differentials in life expectancy

Life expectancy in New Zealand has continued to improve in recent decades. Infant mortality is now at a very low level. The recent gains in life expectancy have been achieved largely through reduction in mortality rates in the late working and retirement age groups. The 1995-1997 life tables show that, while people of Pacific ethnicity currently have a lower life expectancy than the total population, it is higher than that for the Māori population (Table 5). Also, Pacific women outlive their male counterparts by nearly six years, and their advantage is greater than that for the Māori or the total populations.

Table 5

Life Expectancy at Birth and at Age 65 Years, Pacific, Māori and Total New Zealand Populations, 1995-1997

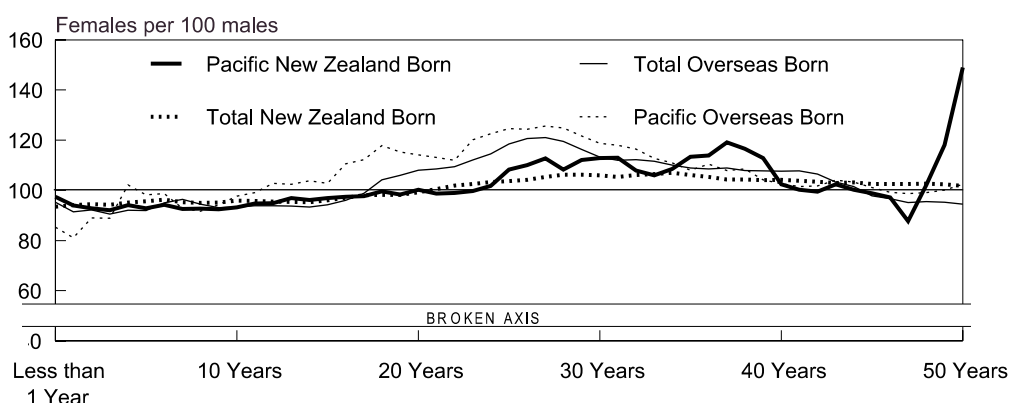
	Pacific	Māori	Total New Zealand Population
Life expectancy (years)			
At birth			
male	69.8	67.2	74.3
female	75.6	71.6	79.6
female - male	5.8	4.4	5.3
At 65 years			
male	13.4	12.2	15.5
female	16.6	14.5	19.0
female - male	3.2	2.3	3.5

Life expectancy gains among the Pacific community may be expected to continue as health-related issues, such as smoking, diet and housing conditions, are addressed and as medical advances are achieved. If the Pacific population follows the pattern of the total population we may expect to see the sex differential become smaller as men make greater longevity gains than women in the future.

More females than males

For a number of social reasons, as well as the important historical role that remittances from New Zealand have played in Island economies (Bertram and Watters, 1986), immigration from the Islands has tended to favour females, with males tending to remain in the Islands. This is exacerbated by excess male accident mortality in the young adult age groups. Thus, at most ages over 19, females outnumber males (Figure 3). Overall, there are 103 females of Pacific ethnicities for every 100 males; coincidentally, the same sex ratio as for the total population for June 1999. However, the Pacific population has a much younger age profile, and a ratio more in favour of males would be expected.

Figure 3

Sex Ratio of People of Pacific Ethnicity Aged Under 51 Years, 1996 Census


Note: Smoothed three-year age group moving averages.

The sex ratio for people born in New Zealand is different from that of those born overseas. Among the Pacific-born component, there are 110 females for every 100 males. This contrasts with 103 New Zealand-born males of Pacific ethnicities for every 100 New Zealand-born females, which is consistent with what we would expect of a population with a young age structure. Moreover, while New Zealand-born women exceed the number of New Zealand-born men from the mid-twenties, this phenomenon is seen among the total overseas born at an earlier age, from their late teen years, with those born in the Pacific even earlier, in their mid-teens, reflecting the effects of differential migration. For both the New Zealand born and overseas born, this difference is maintained until the late-forties. Among the elderly, people born in the Pacific follow a trend matching that of the New Zealand-born population, unlike the total overseas-born population, which is heavily dominated by men.

A number of factors contribute to this, such as the tendency for women to live longer, for some older Island-born people to retire back to the islands, for young adult men to be more prone to accidental death or being missed in the census and for there to be differential migration among young adults born in New Zealand. Among the overseas born, there is also diversity depending on birthplace. Over time, these factors are likely to change in significance.

A youthful age structure

The age and sex structure of the Pacific communities reflects the combined impact of past changes in the dynamics of population growth, namely fertility, mortality and migration. In addition, miscegenation and inter-ethnic mobility are the two other factors contributing to the New Zealand Pacific community's youthful age structure.

Table 6

Age Structure for Selected Pacific Ethnicities, 1996 Census

Ethnicity	Number of People		Percentage of Total for Each Sex				Median Age (Years)		
			Under 15		Over 65				
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Total
Samoan	50,019	51,735	41.0	37.5	2.1	3.0	19.3	21.2	20.2
Cook Islands	23,298	23,721	44.1	40.6	2.8	3.0	17.6	19.8	18.7
Tongan	15,699	15,690	43.5	41.6	2.4	3.2	18.4	19.3	18.9
Niuean	9,183	9,291	42.5	39.1	2.7	4.1	18.6	20.6	19.6
Tokelauan	2,433	2,484	42.3	39.1	2.7	3.0	18.3	20.2	19.3
Fijian	3,786	3,909	32.6	30.4	2.4	3.8	22.8	24.5	23.6
Total Pacific	99,837	102,399	40.9	37.6	2.5	3.3	19.5	21.3	20.4
NZ Māori	258,000	265,374	39.0	36.1	2.7	3.3	20.5	22.2	21.4
Total New Zealand	1,777,464	1,840,842	24.1	22.0	10.2	13.1	32.2	33.7	32.9

As is common among high fertility populations, Pacific people in New Zealand are quite youthful. At the 1996 Census, 2 out of every 5 people were children under 15 years of age (Table 6). The median age (half the population is below this age) for the New Zealand Pacific population at the 1996 Census was 20.4 years compared with 32.9 years for the total New Zealand population. In each case, the combined effect of differential migration, inter-ethnic mobility and the sex gap in life expectancy results in a higher median age for females than males. The relationship between the age and sex structure of the Pacific population and that of the total population can be seen in Figure 4, with the Pacific pyramid showing the classic shape for a young and dynamic population, in contrast to the rapidly developing “coffin” shape of a maturing total New Zealand population.

Figure 4

Age Sex Pyramids for Pacific and Total New Zealand Populations, 1996 Census



Spatial distribution

New immigrants to a country typically settle in localised communities where these have become established. The key determinants here are community support and family connections. They also tend to remain close to the main ports of entry at least for their initial settlement period, though they may move later, for example for employment or education purposes. Various other factors also impinge on this, such as lifestyle, access to goods and services, location of other family members and climate.

These factors contribute to two-thirds of Pacific people being found in the Auckland Region (compared with less than 30 percent of New Zealand’s total population). However, there is considerable diversity among the various communities. The Tongan and Niuean communities are much more concentrated in Auckland than other groups, while the Tokelauan community predominantly lives in the Wellington Region (Table 7).

Table 7

Geographic Distribution for Selected Pacific Ethnicities, 1996 Census

	Auckland Region	Rest of North Island	South Island
	Percentage		
Samoan	65.8	27.2	7.0
Cook Islands	57.3	36.3	6.3
Tongan	79.2	16.4	4.4
Niuean	78.6	16.9	4.5
Tokelauan	22.8	73.9	3.2
Fijian	59.5	32.2	8.3
Total Pacific	65.2	28.4	6.4
NZ Māori	24.2	63.4	12.4
Total New Zealand	29.5	45.6	24.9

Within Auckland and Manukau Cities, which contain over half of all people of Pacific ethnicities in New Zealand, suburbs such as Glen Innes, Otahuhu, Mt Wellington, Otara and Mangere are notable for their Pacific communities. Nevertheless, these suburbs are not equally favoured by all Island groups. Nor is the mix within these suburbs static, for there are changes over time with some communities favouring different areas at different times, as may be expected of a relatively mobile population.

However, by far the most striking aspect of this population is the urban preference, with 97 percent living in an urban area and 84 percent of Pacific people living in New Zealand's five largest urban agglomerations. This contrasts with just 48 percent of New Zealand's total population.

Family dynamics

Like the rest of New Zealanders, among Pacific people there is a significant trend away from marriage, and for those choosing to formally marry, to do so at older ages. In 1991, 59 percent of 25 to 34-year-olds were married. However, by 1996, this had fallen to 47 percent. At the same time the percentage of 25 to 34-year-old Pacific people living in de facto relationships rose from 10 percent in 1991 to 15 percent in 1996 (Table 8).

Table 8

Marital Status of Pacific People by Age and Sex, 1996 Census

	Numbers			Percentage of Age Group		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Partnered - legal spouse						
15-24	690	1,272	1,959	4.1	7.2	5.7
25-34	6,687	7,914	14,601	46.3	47.6	47.0
35+	16,737	15,516	32,253	73.0	63.7	68.2
Total	24,117	24,696	48,816	44.6	42.2	43.3
Partnered - de facto spouse						
15-24	1,575	1,539	3,114	9.4	8.7	9.1
25-34	2,538	2,208	4,746	17.6	13.3	15.3
35+	1,746	1,272	3,018	7.6	5.2	6.4
Total	5,856	5,022	10,875	10.8	8.6	9.7
Partnered, not further classifiable						
15-24	108	84	192	0.6	0.5	0.6
25-34	120	114	234	0.8	0.7	0.8
35+	72	48	120	0.3	0.2	0.3
Total	300	246	549	0.6	0.4	0.5
Not Partnered						
15-24	14,349	14,691	29,040	85.8	83.5	84.7
25-34	5,088	6,378	11,469	35.3	38.4	36.9
35+	4,380	7,527	11,907	19.1	30.9	25.2
Total	23,817	28,599	52,419	44.0	48.8	46.5
Total Specified						
15-24	16,719	17,589	34,305	100.0	100.0	100.0
25-34	14,433	16,614	31,053	100.0	100.0	100.0
35+	22,935	24,363	47,298	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total	54,093	58,563	112,659	100.0	100.0	100.0

Not only are more people moving away from formal marriage, there has also been a move towards sole parenting. In 1986, only 21 percent of families in which there was at least one member of Pacific ethnicity had only one parent. By 1996, this percentage had risen to 32 percent, or almost 1 in 3 families. As Table 9 shows, at the individual level, there is a striking increase in the proportion of Pacific people in all age groups and of both sexes who are unpartnered, especially among the 25 to 34-year age group.

Table 9

Living Arrangements by Age and Sex, Pacific People, 1986 and 1996 Censuses

	Living with Spouse			Living with Partner			Not Living with Spouse or Partner		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Percentage of Age Group									
1986 Census									
15-24	6.8	11.5	9.2	7.2	7.6	7.4	85.9	80.9	83.3
25-34	55.6	60.3	58.0	12.9	9.9	11.4	31.4	29.8	30.6
35+	74.7	67.8	71.3	4.9	3.6	4.3	20.4	28.6	24.5
Total	46.5	45.9	46.2	8.0	6.8	7.4	45.5	47.2	46.4
1996 Census									
15-24	3.7	6.7	5.2	9.6	8.9	9.3	86.6	84.4	85.5
25-34	43.9	45.2	44.6	17.9	13.6	15.6	38.2	41.3	39.8
35+	69.4	59.9	64.5	7.7	5.2	6.4	22.9	34.9	29.1
Total	42.1	39.7	40.9	11.0	8.7	9.8	46.8	51.6	49.3
Change 1986-1996									
15-24	-3.1	-4.8	-4.0	2.4	1.3	1.8	0.7	3.5	2.2
25-34	-11.7	-15.1	-13.5	5.0	3.7	4.2	6.7	11.4	9.2
35+	-5.2	-7.9	-6.8	2.7	1.6	2.1	2.5	6.3	4.7
Total	-4.4	-6.2	-5.3	3.0	1.8	2.4	1.4	4.4	3.0

An attempt to collect data on extended families was made, for the first time, in the 1996 Census. It was found that 34 percent of Pacific people live in extended families. Related to this statistic, it is noted that households comprised of more than one family or several unrelated people appear to be on the rise. In 1986, households in which at least one resident was of Pacific ethnicity had on average 4.1 people. By 1996 this had risen to 4.3. At the same time, the proportion of these households which consisted of just one family dropped from 77 percent in 1986 to 71 percent by 1996. Moreover, this change has occurred as the average family size has also been slowly decreasing, down from 3.8 people in 1986 to 3.7 in 1996.

People of Pacific ethnicities are tending to live in rental accommodation. This may indicate a shift away from home ownership, but since the census data does not indicate who owns the dwelling in which people are enumerated, we cannot know whether the owners were people of Pacific ethnicity or not. Nevertheless, it is known that the proportion of Pacific people living in a dwelling with at least one resident owner fell from 51 percent in 1986 to 44 percent in 1996, perhaps mirroring the change in marriage patterns and the formation of new and smaller families.

At the same time, the number of dwellings with at least one resident of Pacific ethnicity increased by more than 81 percent between 1986 and 1996. There was also a very slight increase in the proportion of these dwellings which contained only people of Pacific ethnicity, up from 48 percent to 49 percent.

Links between Pacific and Māori communities are noticeable. In just over half of dwellings in which at least one resident of Pacific ethnicity lived, we find that at least one of the non-Pacific residents had Māori ethnicity, reflecting in part the miscegenation of the population. In addition, in 1996 just over 1 in 7 of the people with Pacific ethnicity also were of New Zealand Māori ethnicity. The importance and rapidity of growth of these links for both the Pacific and the Māori communities is reflected in the fact that 1 in 4 newborn Pacific children also has New Zealand Māori ethnicity (conversely, 1 in 12 Māori children have Pacific ethnicity), and it may be expected that this will become an increasingly important factor for these communities.

Labour market trends

Over the last three censuses, the unemployment rate for adults of Pacific ethnicities has risen, though the sex differential shows that males have a different pattern from females. For males, the rate rose sharply between 1986 and 1991 from 8.1 percent to 13.6 percent. Between 1991 and 1996 the male rate dropped to 11.0 percent and the Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS) data implies that the rate peaked late in 1994. In contrast, the female unemployment rate rose more steadily between 1986 and 1991 from 8.6 percent to 9.2 percent, but it then continued to rise, so that by 1996 it had reached 10.3 percent.

More detailed supporting data is available from the Household Labour Force Survey, though data does not cover the same population as the census, as explained in the introductory remarks. The data from the survey shows that the Pacific population employment rate (that is the proportion of the working-age population who are employed) was higher than the national average at the start of the survey in 1985, but, as the unemployment rate climbed and people dropped out of the labour force, this dropped to significantly less than the national average by 1990.

Of those employed, the Pacific population has a slightly higher proportion working full time (80.7 percent of those employed in the March 1999 quarter) than the national average (76.7 percent of those employed in the March 1999 quarter). This has been the case for all HLFS quarters and this suggests that losses in employment opportunities for Pacific people have hit harder at the part-time workforce than the full-time while the population at large has been moving increasingly into the part-time workforce.

The Pacific population's unemployment rate has been consistently higher than that of the total population over the length of the HLFS, but there are signs that this group has been experiencing a much more rapid decline in their rate over the last half-decade. For example, since peaking at three times that of the total population's unemployment rate in the September 1994 quarter, the Pacific population's unemployment rate has dropped to less than twice that of the total population's rate in the March 1999 quarter. The unemployment rates for the young adults are less than twice those for the total age group, whereas for the older ages groups, Pacific unemployment rates, especially for men, are very much higher than average.

On the other hand, over the same time period the labour force participation rate of the Pacific population has dropped from a level which was higher than that of the total population, to one which since 1991 has been consistently lower. This indicates that Pacific people, especially women, are more likely to drop out of the labour force altogether than to be seen as unemployed and actively seeking work. This accounts for at least some of this change.

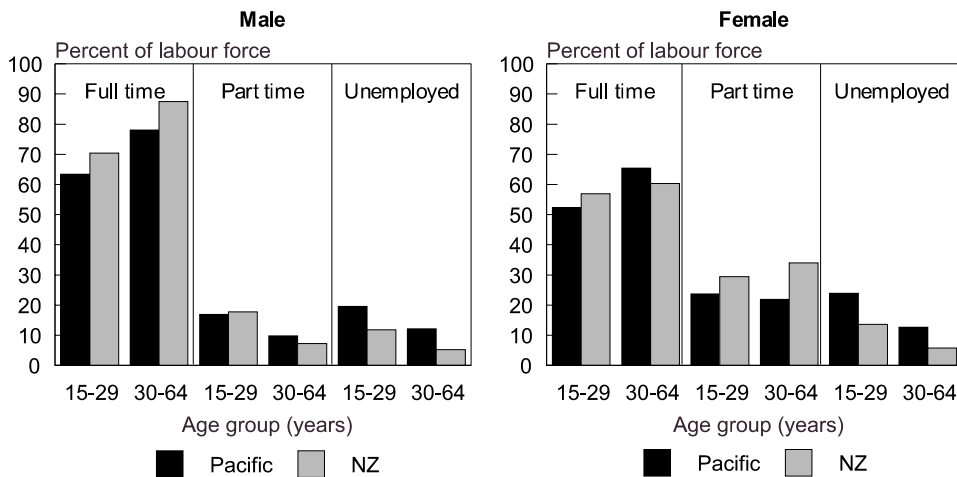
Table 10

**Labour Force Status by Age Group and Sex for People of Pacific Ethnicities
and for Total New Zealand, 1986 and 1996 Censuses**

Labour Force Status	Census Year	Age Group				
		15-24	25-34	35-44	45-64	15-64
Pacific People						
Gainfully Employed						
Male	1986	60.9	87.3	88.3	74.9	76.3
	1996	49.7	72.8	72.4	56.2	61.9
Female	1986	48.7	52.4	62.3	46.2	51.9
	1996	43.1	52.5	57.0	45.0	49.0
Unemployed and Actively Seeking Work						
Male	1986	13.0	6.6	5.3	5.6	8.4
	1996	15.0	10.2	9.8	8.5	11.4
Female	1986	12.5	8.6	5.9	4.7	8.9
	1996	16.5	10.2	7.8	5.5	10.8
Non Labour Force						
Male	1986	26.1	6.1	6.4	19.6	15.3
	1996	35.3	17.0	17.8	35.3	26.8
Female	1986	38.8	39.0	31.8	49.1	39.1
	1996	40.5	37.3	35.2	49.6	40.2
Total New Zealand						
Gainfully Employed						
Male	1986	67.8	91.6	94.2	79.0	82.0
	1996	61.9	82.9	85.5	76.2	76.6
Female	1986	57.0	57.4	69.9	47.4	57.0
	1996	56.6	63.5	70.9	60.5	62.7
Unemployed and Actively Seeking Work						
Male	1986	9.6	3.5	2.0	1.9	4.5
	1996	10.2	6.5	4.9	3.6	6.1
Female	1986	10.3	5.7	4.3	2.3	5.7
	1996	10.9	6.1	4.6	2.7	5.8
Not in Labour Force						
Male	1986	22.6	4.9	3.8	19.1	13.6
	1996	27.9	10.6	9.6	20.1	17.3
Female	1986	32.7	36.9	25.7	50.3	37.3
	1996	32.5	30.4	24.5	36.9	31.5

Census data between 1986 and 1996 (Table 10) similarly indicates that the loss of both Pacific men and women from the labour force is significant in all age groups, though most apparent for males at ages 45 years and over. Analysis of the data shows that the losses from the labour force among Pacific men, in particular, is from the full-time rather than part-time workforce. This contrasts with the pattern for the total population. Similarly, for women, the substantial movement of women in the 45 to 64-year age group into labour force between 1986 and 1996 seen in the total population has not occurred for Pacific women. Thus, changes in the unemployed component of the labour force (Figure 5) need to be seen as only part of overall labour dynamics.

Figure 5

Labour Force Status, Pacific and Total New Zealand Populations, 1996 Census**Changing occupational and industry structure**

Major changes are already being seen in the distribution of people in the workforce across occupations and industries. Most employed Pacific people work today in occupations or industries that are at most risk in the global economy, or subject to major technological change. In particular, processing and manufacturing, are most vulnerable to externally driven change.

Changes in the industrial focus of the New Zealand labour market has had a differentially detrimental effect on the employment opportunities available to this group. From the beginning of the HLFS (December 1985) until the present quarter (March 1999), the total number of people employed in the manufacturing sector has dropped as a proportion of total employment from 20.4 percent to 16.4 percent. However, Pacific people are over-represented in this industry group. In the December 1985 quarter, 42.5 percent of those employed in the Pacific population worked in Manufacturing, indicating that restructuring has had a much greater impact among this group than among the population at large. This has fallen to 30.7 percent in the March 1999 quarter, a much more severe impact.

Conversely, Pacific people are also heavily represented in other industries, such as Wholesale and Retail Trade and Restaurants and Hotels, which belong to a growing sector servicing a consumer-oriented market, and in Community, Social and Personal Services, also areas of significant growth and potential further development.

The 1996 Census also revealed that people of Pacific ethnicities tended to be under-represented in managerial and professional occupations (Table 11) and over-represented in trades and elementary occupations.

Table 11

Occupation Group for Pacific People and New Zealand Total, 1996 Census

	Pacific	New Zealand
	Percentage	
Legislators, Administrators and Managers	4.3	12.2
Professionals	5.9	12.4
Technicians and Associate Professionals	6.9	11.5
Clerks	15.6	14.0
Service and Sales Workers	17.3	14.6
Agriculture and Fishery Workers	3.3	9.9
Trades Workers	9.6	9.6
Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers	19.4	8.7
Elementary Occupations	17.6	7.2

Income distribution

Personal income represents the sum of income from all sources, and thus does not equate only to earnings. Information on income is collected by the census for all adults, including people employed, unemployed and not in the labour force. The median value of specified incomes for people of Pacific ethnicities in the 1996 Census were overall lower than the national medians in every age group (Table 12). Moreover, as the median incomes for age groups in the whole population continued to increase into the 45 to 54-year age group, those for Pacific people peaked in the 35 to 44-year age group and then declined sharply.

Table 12

Median Personal Income (\$) of Pacific People by Age Group, 1996 Census

Age Group	Pacific Ethnicities			Total New Zealand
	New Zealand Born	Overseas Born	Total Pacific	
15-19	1,800	400	1,500	3,700
20-24	13,800	9,700	12,400	14,700
25-34	21,300	14,600	17,000	22,100
35-44	22,400	17,100	18,000	23,300
45-54	19,900	16,200	16,500	24,400
55-64	12,800	10,100	10,300	15,700
65 and over	10,800	8,700	8,900	12,000

This can be attributed primarily to the development of a significant New Zealand-born and trained workforce among the Pacific communities, which had by 1996 not yet reached 45 years of age. This is a direct reflection of the improvements in the skill base of the community, as is borne out when we look at the data by birth place of respondent. In every age group, the New Zealand-born component has a much higher income than the overseas-born component.

Education

Adults of Pacific ethnicities generally tend to have a smaller proportion of the population with higher academic qualifications than the adult New Zealand population as a whole. While 8 percent of the total population are degree graduates, only 2 percent of Pacific men and women are (Table 13). This discrepancy is also seen in vocational tertiary qualifications although, in this case, an analysis by age shows that the Pacific population is as equally represented as the total population for the 15 to 19-year age group, and almost as well in the 20 to 24-year age group (Table 14). This suggests that as the younger generations move through, the achievement levels will match those of the total population and the skill base will have an impact on potential economic well-being and growth.

While for both the Pacific and the total populations there is a significant difference between the male and female skill bases, the two populations are similar in pattern. At each educational level, the male to female ratio in each population is very similar, with only the intermediate and skilled vocational groups revealing a significantly stronger representation among Pacific women relative to Pacific men than is apparent in the total population. It is also significant that in both groups the pattern for advanced vocational qualifications is opposite in the sex distributions than for other qualifications, with women higher than men (Table 13). This reflects the concentration of women in some professions, such as nursing and primary teaching, which require these qualifications.

Table 13

Highest Educational Qualification Attained as a Percentage of Population, Aged 15 Years and Over, Pacific and Total New Zealand Populations, 1996 Census

Highest Qualification Level	Pacific Ethnicity		Total New Zealand	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Percent of total for each sex				
Higher Degree	0.7	0.5	3.4	2.3
Bachelor Degree	1.8	1.6	6.4	5.0
Advanced Vocational Qualification	2.5	3.9	5.4	9.6
Intermediate Vocational Qualification	0.6	0.3	2.3	0.5
Skilled Vocational Qualification	2.9	1.5	9.7	3.4
Basic Vocational Qualification	2.4	3.2	2.9	3.7

Pacific people are committed to education as a mechanism for advancement. Among the 15 to 19-year-olds, very nearly half are involved in either full-time or part-time study, though this drops sharply to 1 in 5 for the 20 to 24-year-olds, three-quarters of whom are studying full time. Interestingly, there is little difference between the participation rates of the New Zealand born and the overseas born. Moreover, the rates are only a little behind the total population for those under 25 years of age, and significantly higher for those aged 25 years or more. The net effect is that Pacific people show higher overall educational participation rates than the total population, with a significantly higher rate for full-time study.

Table 14

Study/Training Course Attendance for the Pacific and Total New Zealand Populations Aged 15 Years and Over, 1996 Census

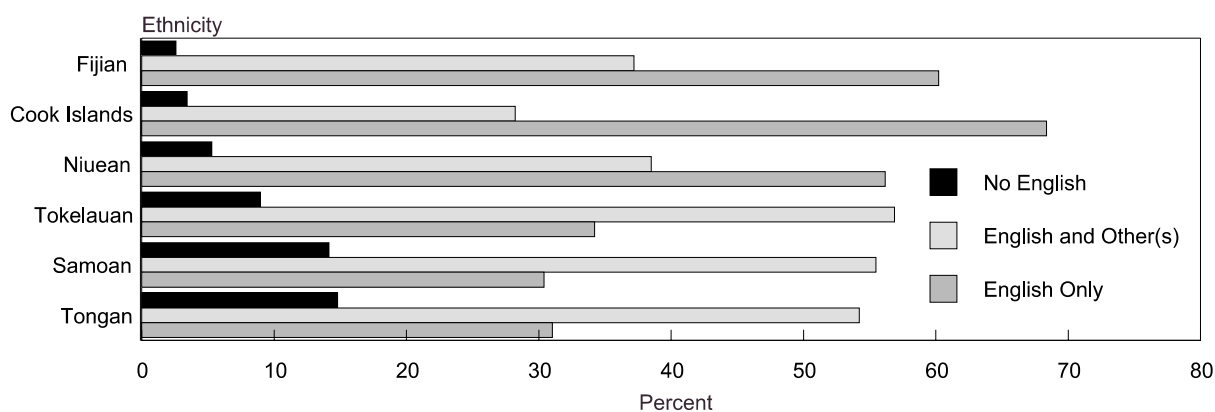
Population	Study Course Attendance		
	Full-time	Part-time	Not Attending
Percent			
People of Pacific Ethnicities			
Under 25 Years	36.70	5.15	58.15
25 Years and over	2.33	5.25	92.42
New Zealand Total			
Under 25 Years	30.56	4.12	65.32
25 Years and over	4.50	4.26	91.24

Language skills

One key link between education, the skill base, cultural cohesion and economic potential lies in the language resources of the communities. A language skill is one area in which New Zealand, with a history of relative isolation and reliance on limited external contacts, has traditionally performed poorly. Pacific people have a comparatively rich knowledge base in this area (Figure 6). Almost half of all Pacific people who have specified that they speak at least one language have indicated that they speak more than one, behind people of Asian ethnicities at nearly 60 percent, but ahead of people of Māori (25.6 percent) and Other European (34.9 percent) ethnicities, and well ahead of people of New Zealand European ethnicity at 5.2 percent. This strength is seen among both the New Zealand-born and the overseas-born populations, though the New Zealand-born component has significantly weaker language skills than the overseas born in each case (35.6 percent and 63.3 respectively for Pacific people), lending substance to the concerns over language skills maintenance.

Figure 6

Languages Spoken, Selected Pacific Ethnicities, 1996 Census



In terms of the potential for exploiting global technological and economic benefits, English language skills are likely to remain a fundamental factor for some time to come. This is significant for the Samoan and Tongan communities, in particular, with their strong infrastructures and relatively recent migration history, since these two have the largest proportion who do not speak English. At between 14 and 15 percent in each case, they are significantly higher than other groups (Figure 6). Interestingly, though, the next highest group is the Tokelauan community, at 9 percent, which migrated early but have remained within a limited area and have shown little inclination to move within New Zealand after settlement. Nevertheless, in all cases the proportion of the community without English is small and does not predominantly comprise the younger people. Among these three groups less than one-third speak only English, and nearly two-thirds are at least bilingual. This contrasts sharply with the Niuean, Cook Islands and Fijian groups, where nearly two-thirds stated their only language to be English and less than one-third have more than one language.

Future demographic prospects

Charting future population trends with certainty even beyond the short term is a challenging task, especially for a population group representing a tapestry of ethnicities, with varying fertility trends and different prospects for gains through migration. Given the uncertainty surrounding future demographic events, Statistics New Zealand normally derives a range of population projections using different assumptions about likely future changes in various population processes, namely fertility, mortality, inter-ethnic mobility and net migration. These are not predictions or forecasts. They merely indicate what the future population size and structure would be if the given assumptions are met.

In 1998, Statistics New Zealand produced a new set of population projections for people of Pacific ethnicity resident in New Zealand using the estimated resident population as at June 1996 as a base. These projections include adjustments to the census count for census undercount (as measured by the 1996 Post Enumeration Survey) and for New Zealand residents temporarily overseas, which were factors not included in previous projections.

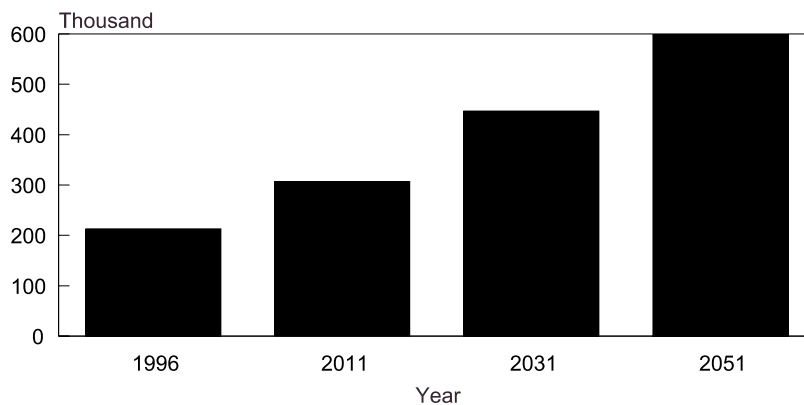
The narration here draws on series 5, the medium series. This series assumes that the average family size as implied by the total fertility rate for Pacific people in New Zealand will drop from the current 3.3 births per woman to 2.2 by the year 2051. Life expectancy at birth for men is projected to improve by 8.0 years, from 69.5 years to 77.5 years, and for women by 7.3 years, from 75.7 years to 83.0 years. This series also assumes medium inter-ethnic mobility and a long-term net annual gain through international migration of 1,000 people per annum. The other series provide scenarios which show the effect of changes in any or all of these components. These projections do not take into account non-demographic factors which may invalidate the projections. These range from the consequences of wars, catastrophes and global warming to such imponderables as immigration policy changes, health issues, social attitudinal change and the relative attractiveness of New Zealand as a place to live.

Slower population growth

Under the medium series, the Pacific population in New Zealand is projected to grow from an estimated 213,000 in 1996 to 599,000 in 2051, an increase of 386,000 or 181 percent (Figure 7). The average annual growth rate is projected to fall steadily and significantly from the current 3.3 percent to 2.0 percent by 2010-2013 and further to 1.4 percent after 2040. This is still well in excess of the projected rate of growth for the total population, which by 2051 is projected to be negative.

Figure 7

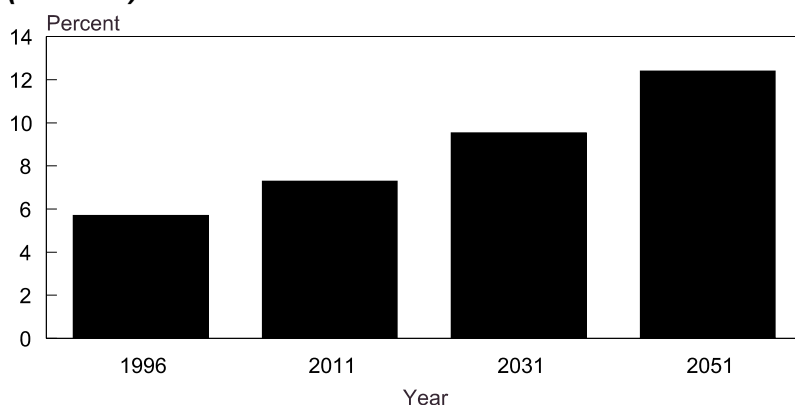
Projected Pacific Population in New Zealand, 1996-2051 (Series 5)



Because the Pacific population is expected to grow at a much faster pace than the rest of the New Zealand population, their share of the total New Zealand population will double, from 6 percent in 1996 to 12 percent in 2051 (Figure 8).

Figure 8

Projected Pacific Share of New Zealand Population, 1996-2051 (Series 5)



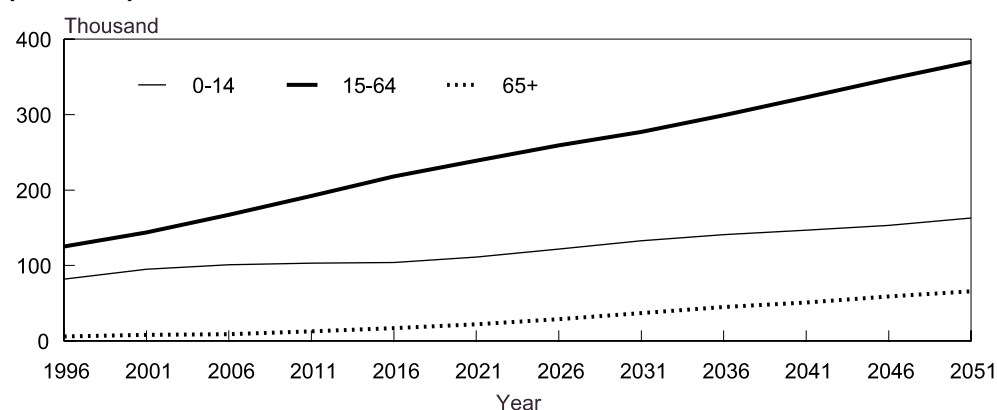
Population ageing

The age structure of Pacific people will undergo major changes over the next 50 years. As with the total population, Pacific people are an ageing population, but even by 2050, the Pacific community will still be a little younger than the total population is now. Their median age is projected to increase by 9 years from 20 years at present to 29 years by 2051.

Because fertility is expected to remain above replacement level, the number of children is projected to almost double, from 82,000 in 1996 to 163,000 in 2051 (Figure 9). By that time, they will make up 1 in 5 of all New Zealand children, compared with 1 in 10 in 1996.

Figure 9

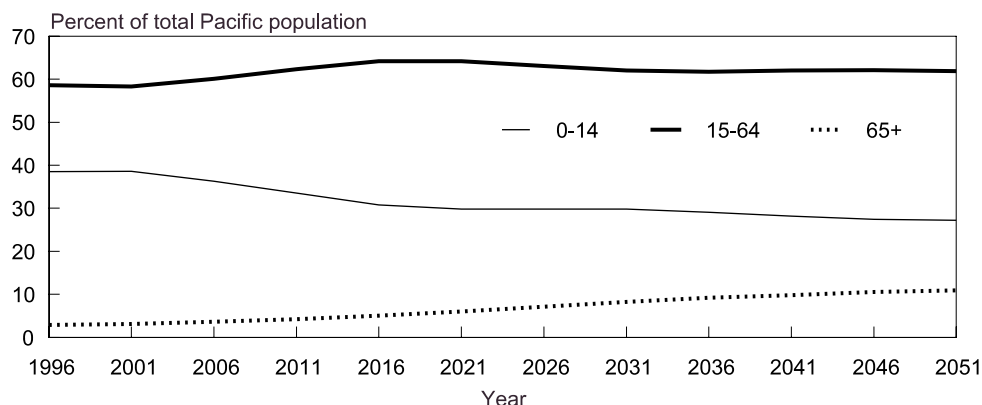
Projected Pacific Population by Age Group, 1996-2051 (Series 5)



The number of Pacific people aged 65 years and over is projected to jump 11-fold from 6,000 in 1996 to 67,000 in 2051. By then, they will account for 11 percent of all Pacific people in New Zealand, compared with just 3 percent in 1996 (Figure 10). By comparison, by 2051 children will comprise a smaller portion of the Pacific population, down to 27 percent from 38 percent in 1996. This is due to both the projected decline in the Pacific birth rate and the gradual ageing of the population. Now, there are about 13 children under 15 years for every elderly person, but by 2050, there will be barely 2.5.

Figure 10

**Projected Age Distribution of Pacific People in New Zealand, 1996-2051
(Series 5)**



The number of Pacific people in the main working ages, 15-64 years, is projected to almost treble from 125,000 in 1996 to 370,000 in 2051. By then they will comprise 62 percent of all Pacific people, up slightly from 59 percent in 1996. Further analysis indicates a significantly changing profile, and a growing proportion of the New Zealand labour force will be people of Pacific ethnicities, from the younger to older age working ages (Table 15).

Table 15

Pacific People in Working Ages and Percentage of Total Population, 1996-2051

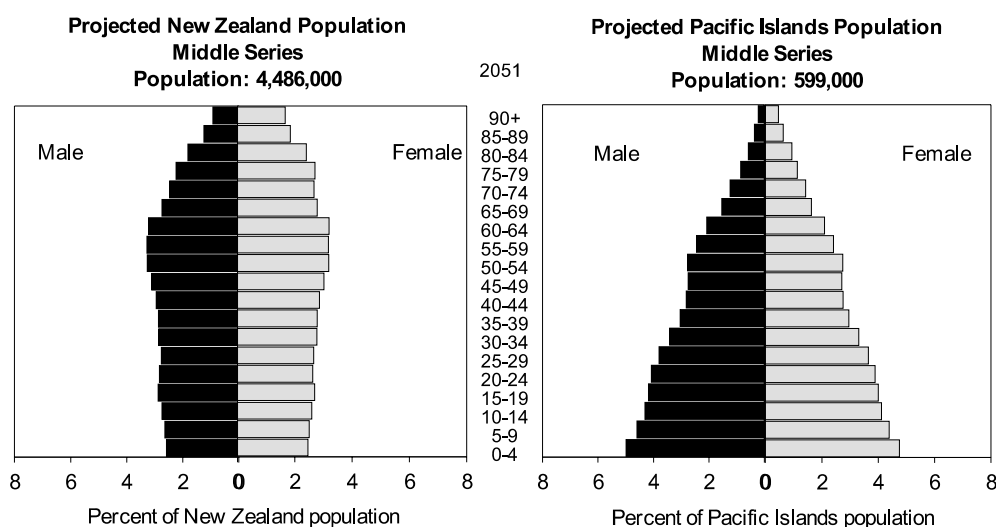
Year	Population (000)			Percentage of Total Population		
	15-34	35-49	50-64	15-34	35-49	50-64
1996	76	34	15	7	4	3
2011	107	53	31	10	6	4
2031	141	82	54	14	10	6
2051	181	102	87	18	13	10

Currently there are 76,000 people in the younger working ages (15-34 years) and this is projected to increase by 140 percent to 181,000 by 2051. Whereas they presently make up 6.7 percent (or 1 in 15) of all New Zealanders in this age group, by 2051 this will have grown to 18.3 percent (or 1 in 6). Subsequent passage of these cohorts into the middle and older ages will produce similar rises in future decades.

Overall, the age-sex pyramid (Figure 11) for both the total New Zealand and the Pacific projected populations show that, by the year 2051, while there will remain significant differences in age structure, the Pacific population will have attained a profile not dissimilar to that of the 1996 total population shown in the pyramid in Figure 4.

Figure 11

Age Sex Pyramids for Projected Total New Zealand and Pacific Populations, 2051



Towards a conclusion

When the projections are viewed in terms of the current demographic and socio-economic context outlined above, there is much that can be said about the future of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. While there is much that is volatile and susceptible to rapid change, there are also factors which are not so amenable to change.

In the national context, people of Pacific ethnicities will continue to be a dynamic part of a slow growing, ageing New Zealand population, not simply subject to a changing environment, but to some degree having the ability to influence the direction of this change. Many of the social changes affecting Pacific people derive from global trends and mirror the experiences of many other people. For example, in many countries, people are experiencing later marriage, family instability, growing incidence of sole parenting, life expectancy increases and educational improvements. However, there are some social changes which seem specific to the social well-being of Pacific communities. Housing conditions have somewhat worsened for people of Pacific ethnicities who are living in families, with more crowding and an increase in reliance on rental accommodation.

The Pacific community in New Zealand, as expected from their migration history, have remained highly urbanised, with just over 97 percent in urban centres (with 1,000 or more people), and may be expected to remain an urban-based population. Because of this and because of its younger age structure, globalisation of employment markets and employment demands will continue to place social pressures on this community until the educational skill base develops to match the national average levels.

Pacific people are likely to play an increasingly significant role in the economic future of New Zealand. The New Zealand labour force is ageing fast, at a time of huge technology change, creating potential opportunities for young Pacific entrants. Changes are expected to be rapid. Over the next decade, the share of the labour force aged over 45 years will grow from 28 percent to 43 percent, and a little further down the track, in 20 years time, some 30 percent of the new entrants into the labour force could be Pacific men and women. Potentially, all will be the products of what might be referred to as the Internet generation, at ease with established, emerging and new technologies. The consequences for Pacific people, in the short term, is that the employment and educational problems being currently experienced may become more pressing as the size of these age groups increases sharply. Advances in their economic situation would improve the New Zealand economic outlook markedly.

Many changes are likely to differ regionally. Auckland is a city with a multicultural composition and a highly dynamic job market, where population growth is becoming dominated by Māori and Pacific communities. Along with people of European, Asian and Māori ethnicities, Pacific people are one of four similarly sized large and overlapping groups that make up Auckland. They provide nearly 30 percent of births, and in 20 years time, will contribute some 30 percent of new entrants into the job market. Pacific people account for a large share of growth in consumer markets, and by 2050, are expected to become one of the largest consumer groups in Auckland.

Pacific people will make up 12 percent of the population within the next 50 years, with nearly one-sixteenth of this population aged 65 and over. We do not know how different their quality of retirement will be. For Pacific people, there are currently a number of health concerns, such as a higher than average vulnerability to diabetes. This may affect the quality of life of older people and have social and cultural implications for the community and the facilities they will require. Similarly, as the size of the elderly population grows, there will be an impact on the need for specific cultural facilities to be addressed and service providers will need to be responsive to this.

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Appendix: Migration data for Pacific people

Migration data, unlike census data, is not available by self-identified ethnicity. However, it can be obtained and analysed on country of last permanent residence. Hence migration data is not directly comparable with census data based on either place of birth or ethnicity. For example, some people migrating from the Pacific may have been born in New Zealand or outside the Pacific. Similarly, there was a sizeable increase in the flows of Fijian-Indians, following the Fijian coup. Fijian-Indians are classified as people of Asian ethnicity. This latter event, in particular, tended to distort the Pacific migration patterns around 1988-1990 with a flow-on effect in the most recent years, as net gains from Fiji continue to exceed those from Samoa. A comparison with census data implies that less than 1 in 5 of the people born in Fiji who arrived in New Zealand in 1994 to 1996 period were of Fijian ethnicity. This emphasises that care is needed in comparing migration and census data since the relationship between country of origin and ethnicity is by no means simple for any group.

Moreover, a person's ethnicity may change after arrival in New Zealand as contacts and links are established with the resident communities, so that the act of migration can affect ethnicity. In addition to this, people frequently change the ethnicities they report, often over quite short periods according to their environment and the context in which they find themselves, and this ethnic mobility can operate on a number of time scales. In the context of the workplace and the home, this change make occur diurnally. In the context of family formation and re-formation the time frame is longer. While the relationship between intermarriage, pre-migration ethnicity and ethnic mobility is complex, it is clear that much of this mixing between Island groups and more particularly with non-Island ethnic groups has occurred since settlement in New Zealand. For example, although 54 percent of Pacific children have multiple ethnicity, only 23 percent of their mothers have multiple ethnicity. This, of course, varies according to the birthplaces of the parents.

The 1980s were characterised by typical migration patterns with a period of net losses at the beginning of the decade, a period of recovery towards the end of the decade (even allowing for the effect of the Fiji coup), only to be followed again by a period of net losses in the early 1990s. This pattern appears to be repeating itself with a decline again noticeable at the end of the 1990s.