

NZEI Te Riu Roa

Tatou talanoa – Let's talk

Rotorua, 21 September 2025

Saunoamaalii Karanina Sumeo

‘Educational Purpose’

Section 4 Education Act 2000

Purpose of Act

The purpose of this Act is to establish and regulate an education system that—

- (a) provides New Zealanders and those studying in New Zealand with the skills, knowledge, and capabilities that they need to fully participate in the labour market, society, and their communities; and
- (b) supports their health, safety, and well-being; and
- (c) assures the quality of the education provided and the institutions and educators that provide and support it; and
- (d) Honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi and supports Māori-Crown relationships.

Government Education Target

TARGET: 80% of Year 8 students at or above the expected curriculum level for their age in reading, writing, and mathematics by December 2030.

- Currently, “47% are at the expected level in reading, 24% in writing, and 23% in mathematics.”

<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/572372/missing-targets-govt-risks-falling-behind-in-four-key-areas>; 08/08/2025

- “Only 8% of poorer students in Year 8 are at or above curriculum level in maths, while for Māori students it’s one in every 10 and for Pacific students it’s one in 16.”

<https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/politics/the-great-divide-large-cohorts-of-maori-pacific-and-poorer-students-more-than-a-year-behind-in-maths-and-writing/W6XMWGMHLNEC7J72LR4PXY6CWM/>, 20/08/2025

Budget 2025/2026 incl:

- Maths and Pāngarau Tutoring for Year 7-8 Students \$39.8m operating funding: To fund the delivery of small group teaching supported by a digital learning platform for up to 34,000 Year 7 to 8 students per year, starting in Term 1, 2026. All schools and kura included.
- Homework and Tutoring Services for Years 9-10 to meet NCEA Corequisites \$6.6m operating funding \$0.03m capital funding: New homework and tutoring services will be made available to learners in Years 9 to 10 **at schools with 50% or more Pacific learners**. The funding will be used to implement a combination of homework centres and tutoring (online and face to face) in literacy and numeracy.
- Supporting Pacific Bilingual and Immersion Education in Schooling continued; Pacific ECE education continued.

Ref: <https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2025-05/est25-v2-educ.pdf>

Government Education Target

TARGET: 80% of students are present for more than 90% of the term.

- Regular Attendance Term 3, 2024: **51.3% for All** students vs 37.5 Maori, **39.5% Pacific**, 52.1% European, 63.8% Asian.
- On average, regular attendance rates are **lower for students in schools with higher socioeconomic barriers** to achievement.
- Overall, the regular attendance rate for all *primary* students was 54.4%, while the overall rate for all *secondary* students was 45.5%.
- Within *justified* absences, absences due to short-term illness or medical reasons continue to be the largest contributor, followed by absences for reasons within school policy. Absences due to truancy, or for an unknown/trivial reason is the biggest contributor to *unjustified* absences in Term 3 2024...*unjustified* student absences shows that 14.3% of all enrolled students had 5+ full days of unjustified absence in Term 3 2024.

References:

- MOE Advice to Associate Minister David Seymour, 14/11/2024: “Release of attendance data for Term 3 2024”
- Term 3 2024 is a drop from 59.7% in 2019, pre-COVID.

Child living in hardship

Children living in hardship

- An estimated 13.4% (156,600) of children live in material hardship. Māori (23.9%), Pacific (28.7%), and children living in a household where there is at least one disabled person (22.6%) all experience higher rates of material hardship (as at year ended June 2024).
- “Inequities in the rates of child poverty can lead to inequities in school achievement, adult employment, income levels, and behavioural, health, and cognitive outcomes” (Office of Auditor General, 2025).

References:

- <https://oag.parliament.nz/2025/child-poverty>; “Effectiveness of arrangements for reducing child poverty”. Office of Auditor General.
- <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/household-income-and-housing-cost-statistics-year-ended-june-2024/>

Pacific - economic snapshot

Home ownership: 16.8% Pacific cf 42.1% all New Zealanders (Census 2023).

Ethnic Pay Gap: The aggregate (all industries) ethnic pay gaps in 2022: 18.8% for the Pacific-European gap, 14.6% for Māori-European, and 10.2% for Asian-European (New Zealand Policy Research Institute, 2024).

Household Income:

- The average Pacific household had an equivalised disposable income (after tax and transfer payments) of \$50,252 cf \$60,982 All households (June 2025 quarter).
- 49.6% of Pacific peoples lived in households with an equivalised disposable income in the bottom 40% of the population.
- 38.2% of all households (incl Pacific) perceived their income as either 'not enough' or 'only just enough'.

Labour force participation rate: 68.4% Pacific cf 70.5% All New Zealanders (June 2025 quarter)

Underutilisation rate: 19.0% Pacific cf 12.8% All New Zealanders

Unemployment rate: 10.9% Pacific cf 5.2% All New Zealanders

References:

- <https://www.auckland.ac.nz/en/news/2025/03/18/pacific-home-ownership-plummets-something-needs-to-change.html>
- https://nzpri.aut.ac.nz/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/926901/Gender-and-ethnic-pay-gaps-An-industry-level-portrait-of-Aotearoa.pdf
- <https://www.stats.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/Labour-market-statistics/Labour-market-statistics-June-2025-quarter/Download-data/labour-market-statistics-june-2025-quarter-summary-diagrams.pdf>

Evolving landscape – how are we preparing?

Ethnic Group	% of 0-14year olds 2023 to 2048	% Total Population Census 2023	% Born Overseas Census 2023	% of Projected Population 2048
European + Other New Zealander	64 to 49	67	18	52
Asian (Indian) (Chinese)	20 to 34	19 (7) (6)	75 (73) (71)	33 (12) (8)
Maori	28 to 31	18	2	20
Pacific (Samoan)	15 to 19	9 (4)	33 (32)	11 (6)
MELAA	2.5 to 5	2	75	4

Notes and References:

- Individuals who identify with more than one ethnicity are counted in each category by Statistics New Zealand, hence totals do not add to 100%.
- <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/national-ethnic-population-projections-2023base-2048/>
- [https://explore.data.stats.govt.nz/vis?tm=POPPR_ETH_013&pg=0&hc\[dataflowId\]=POPPR_ETH_013&snb=1&df\[ds\]=ds-nsiws-disseminate&df\[id\]=POPPR_ETH_013&df\[ag\]=STATSNZ&df\[vs\]=1.0&dq=MAORI%2BEUROOTHER%2BNZPOP%2BASIAN%2BPACIFIC%2BINDIAN%2BCHINESE%2BMELAA.SEX3.AGE0014%2BTOTALALLAGES.P50.&ly\[rw\]=YEAR_POPPR_ETH_013&ly\[cl\]=AGE_POPPR_ETH_013%2CETHNICITY_POPPR_ETH_013&to\[TIME\]=false](https://explore.data.stats.govt.nz/vis?tm=POPPR_ETH_013&pg=0&hc[dataflowId]=POPPR_ETH_013&snb=1&df[ds]=ds-nsiws-disseminate&df[id]=POPPR_ETH_013&df[ag]=STATSNZ&df[vs]=1.0&dq=MAORI%2BEUROOTHER%2BNZPOP%2BASIAN%2BPACIFIC%2BINDIAN%2BCHINESE%2BMELAA.SEX3.AGE0014%2BTOTALALLAGES.P50.&ly[rw]=YEAR_POPPR_ETH_013&ly[cl]=AGE_POPPR_ETH_013%2CETHNICITY_POPPR_ETH_013&to[TIME]=false)

Fundamental Human Rights

Article 7(a)(i) and (c) of International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

(a) Remuneration which provides all workers, as a minimum, with:

(i) Fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value without distinction of any kind, in particular women being guaranteed conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men, with equal pay for equal work;

(c) Equal opportunity for everyone to be promoted in his employment to an appropriate higher level, subject to no considerations other than those of seniority and competence;

Article 5 (e)(i) of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

The rights to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work, to protection against unemployment, to equal pay for equal work, to just and favourable remuneration;

Article 11(1)(d) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

Article 27(1)(b) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Protect the rights of persons with disabilities, on an equal basis with others, to just and favourable conditions of work, including equal opportunities and equal remuneration for work of equal value, safe and healthy working conditions, including protection from harassment, and the redress of grievances;

Reference:

<https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/constitutional-issues-and-human-rights/human-rights/international-human-rights/crpd/>

Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry 2022

Why? Unlawful not enough?

Vision: decency, fairness, social justice, restoration, respect for inherent dignity

Approach: human rights centered, Pacific led and informed, evidence based, good faith, solution seeking, give permission, communicate, welcome discomfort, responsibility, accountability, act in the spirit of *tautua*-service.

Collaboration : HRC, Business, Unions, state (MPP, MBIE), experts advisors.

Social and Commercial Impact:

- Dignity of tangata Pasefika honoured, silence lifted about systemic unfairness and disrespect, collective sense of visibility and confidence, pride in contribution and belonging, mana, call to action.
- Private and public entities, including unions, reviewing established processes for recruitment, progression and leadership for barriers and opportunities for equity and equality for Pacific and other marginalised population cohorts.

Reference:

New Zealand Human Right Commission. (2022). Voices of Pacific Peoples – eliminating pay gaps. Wellington, Huan Rights Commission.

Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry 2022

Key Recs:

- Pay Transparency legislation to be enacted.
- Equal Pay Act to include ethnicity and disability along with gender.
- Establish a national taskforce to ensure Pacific, Māori and ethnic pay gaps are closed by 2042.
- ILO 190 Violence and Harassment Convention to be ratified.
- Minimum wage to be the Living Wage.
- Better protection for contractors as recommended by the Tripartite Group (government, unions, business).

Structural Impact:

- Employment Relations (Employee Remuneration Disclosure) Amendment Act 2025 passed into law on 27 August 2025.

“we had a number of submitters to that bill, including the Human Rights Commission who had done a study into the Pacific pay gap and one of the key things that they found was that pay secrecy in New Zealand was really hampering the progress of New Zealand workplaces....That was where the idea for the bill originally came from ...” Camila Belich, MP, 20/8/2025

- Ministry for Women – gender pay gap toolkit being re-developed to include gender, ethnic and disable pay gaps.
- Peoples Select Committee on Pay Equity - hearing repeated calls for the recognition of disproportionate impact on Māori, Pacific, ethnic minorities and disabled women and their dependents and wider communities.

Reference:

New Zealand Human Right Commission. (2022). Voices of Pacific Peoples – eliminating pay gaps. Wellington, Huan Rights Commission.
Ref: https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/hansard-debates/rhr/combined/HansDeb_20250820_20250820_32

Forum Table Discussion

As a Pacific union member and advocate:

- O a mai outou? How are you all doing?
- Where is your voice at decision making tables, in impact measures, in policy development? Get there.
- How are you navigating diversity and storms internally to stay focused, safe, united, authentic, and unapologetic towards success for Pacific workforce and children?
- How are you getting past the external victim blaming to continue to pursue and claim your just rights?

As an ECE, school, learning institution, union colleague:

- Who and how are your Pacific colleagues?
- How is Pacific input reflected in your evidence, strategy, submissions, milestones, resources distribution, leadership, public and political engagement?
- What is your Pacific workforce **data** showing re roles, responsibilities, leadership, income level?
- Impact - what are policies to monitor and evaluate for impact on equal pay and opportunity, cultural safety, and pay equity for your Pacific colleagues/staff?
- How are you building, adapting your Pacific capacity and capability to ensure safety, quality provision, and enabling better educational success for Pacific children now, and looking ahead?

Faafetai lava. Ia manuia.