

Pacific Communities

Feedback has been collated from community-led reports and previous publicly available community engagement activity across government and NZ Police. We have pulled the feedback into one place to identify themes that have helped inform the Standing Together Against Hate series and greater NZ Police work.

The community feedback has been grouped into the following themes: Identity, Engagement, Government, Law and Protection, Support, Data, and Communications and Media.



Te Raranga
Standing together
against hate



‘Identity’

‘Āiga, defined by focus group members as the collective someone is part of. Family, culture and spirituality, plays a pivotal role for Pasifika as does language... culturally important terms like fa’afāfine, fa’atama, fakaleiti, fa’afāfine, mātū, palopa, vakasalewalewa, akava’ine and fakafafine, but also being able to claim identities like non-binary and rainbow is important for them.

Churches have a unique role in showing what love is inside Pasifika communities.

Key themes

Connection and faith are critical to Pacific peoples identities, culture, and wellbeing as a community.

Little is known about some of the experiences faced by communities in the past, and the traumas continue to impact on their connection with their identity.

Recognise faith as an important part of Pacific peoples’ wellbeing. Pacific peoples told us that solutions... need to understand Pacific peoples as people of spirituality and faith.

Church leaders and community/church spaces are where Pacific peoples socially organise themselves in the Aotearoa New Zealand context and can be a vital partner in any intervention.

Pasifika people thrive on service, connection and being relational, but as we age our peers and others we hold dear may be lost from the physical realm, or we may be disconnected from others we hold dear and be more isolated than we want to be.

What we heard from Pacific communities about

'Engagement'

Key themes

Effective partnerships need to be built through meaningful conversations and engagement.

What we heard from Pacific communities about

‘Government’

“Clean house—if you always do what you've always done, that's what you'll get! Know our community, engage with our community. Listen to those who work at the grassroots level of communities. Resource community organisations to provide services for our community.”

“Pacific terminologies are important. Need to recognise cultural diversity. Recognising, prioritising and valuing ethnic specific knowledge.”

Key themes

Need to be able to see themselves reflected in policy and decision making.

Government need to do more to incorporate Pacific values, expecting Pacific communities to work within ‘western’ systems creates barriers and inequities.

Government need to honour its commitment to Māori and other communities, key to creating a socially cohesive society.

Don’t want to be invisible under the umbrella of ‘diverse communities’.

Strong leadership and redistribution of decision making needed to enable changes.

Continue to experience discrimination, esp. where they are unaware of general practices or those practices are in conflict with Pacific peoples cultural norms.

Were supportive of te Ao Māori, believing that “their fight is our fight” but felt invisible being captured under diverse communities.

Pacific peoples talked to us extensively about the inequalities and inequities they experience on an almost daily basis. They expressed sadness, shame, guilt and fear of not having the right knowledge and support to know what to do, feeling powerless to change things, recognising some things were hidden, and fearful to speak up and ask for help.

Inequality – There are growing disparities for Pasifika across a range of outcomes such as education, housing, access to technology etc. Vulnerable Pasifika communities are continuing to face complex system issues.

‘Law & Protection’

Pasifika (like other communities we engaged with) found key terms including “hate speech”, “the incitement of hatred” and “freedom of speech” particularly unclear. Due to lack of clarity, Pasifika tertiary students paid a consultant to simplify and clarify the issues presented in the discussion document to inform their public submission.

Pasifika rangatahi also spoke of the uneven resources of perpetrators and victims. Perpetrators (likely to be Pākehā New Zealanders) have better knowledge of court systems, can more afford good representation, and, therefore, are more likely to get a better outcome.

Key themes

Want to see a more equitable approach to justice, noting bias in policing, fines proportional to income, more awareness of prevention services.

Question how laws will be interpreted and raise concern about unintended consequences, how will blatantly hateful behaviour be differentiated from ignorant behaviour.

Church leaders and elder are important roles within Pacific communities, concern how laws could impact their role within the community.

Youth want to see more surveillance of those with a history of hate incidents / offences.

Pasifika rangatahi have low confidence in the justice system due to their experiences of biased policing and poor access to justice.

The current avenues for redress are not well understood or accessible for Pasifika communities. This includes the courts and complaints mechanisms such as the Human Rights Commission and the Health and Disability Commissioner. People recommend more awareness-raising and skill-building to raise knowledge and capability to enable their people to participate in legal and complaints processes.

‘Support Services’

Pacific peoples continue to seek help from people and relationships that are trusted, primarily family members, friends and often faith leaders. Often these entrusted people are not equipped or informed to give them the support they need. Situations will often reach crisis intervention before anything can be done.

“Education is the key. Start from: home, church, school, community groups.”

Key themes

Community led services tend to be preferred.

Community led can be better at supporting Pacific cultures and customs, but more support needs to be provided to these trusted relationships.

Appropriate approaches need to be considered for changes to be done in ways that are safe and accessible to the community.

Education is key to supporting healthier and safe outcomes for the community.

Family structures are central to Pacific cultures, give Pacific people the tools to support themselves and each other.

“Support families with counselling and support them so they can be more equipped. Enabling kids to speak up and when they disclose, act on it.”

“Stigma and shame as powerful emotional and behavioural drivers to maintaining silence and not challenge existing social norms that need to change, with the right support, tools and infrastructure.”

‘They are always viewed as brown first, before the other complexities that come with sexuality or gender identity... There is hurt in Pasifika Rainbow+ spaces about resources not being shared.’

Participants talked about needing to be intentional to include Pasifika Rainbow+ elders, because they believed people would not reach out without being welcomed in. This included websites and pamphlets making it clear that an organisation offers support to the Rainbow community. If your material doesn’t advertise that you support the Rainbow community, participants believed they will not come through your door.

What we heard from Pacific communities about

‘Communications & Media’

Key themes

Messaging needed across schools, universities, and workplaces to reinforce that harmful behaviour is not ok.

“Schools [should] discuss the hateful speech and discrimination in schools, universities, workplaces etc. Promote that it's not OK to support or turn a blind eye to this behaviour.”