

# Experiences and support needs of the Pacific sexual violence workforce in Aotearoa New Zealand

## Summary for the Pacific workforce

### Authors

This document summarises the main findings from the following report:

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The research team acknowledges the members of the Pacific sexual violence (SV) workforce who responded to our call to participate in this study. We are humbled by your gift of time and expertise, your willingness to share knowledge and stories, some of which were painful and heavy, others warm and affirming, all of which were yours. We are in awe of your dedication to your work with and for our Pacific peoples affected by sexual violence.

*Fa'afetai tele, Malo 'aupito, our sincere and warmest Pacific thanks!*

*"We want to thrive, not just survive!"*

## What we learned about the workforce

51%

are largely of Samoan ethnicity, but overall are a **wonderfully diverse group** from across the Pacific Islands.

70%

are over **40 years of age**.

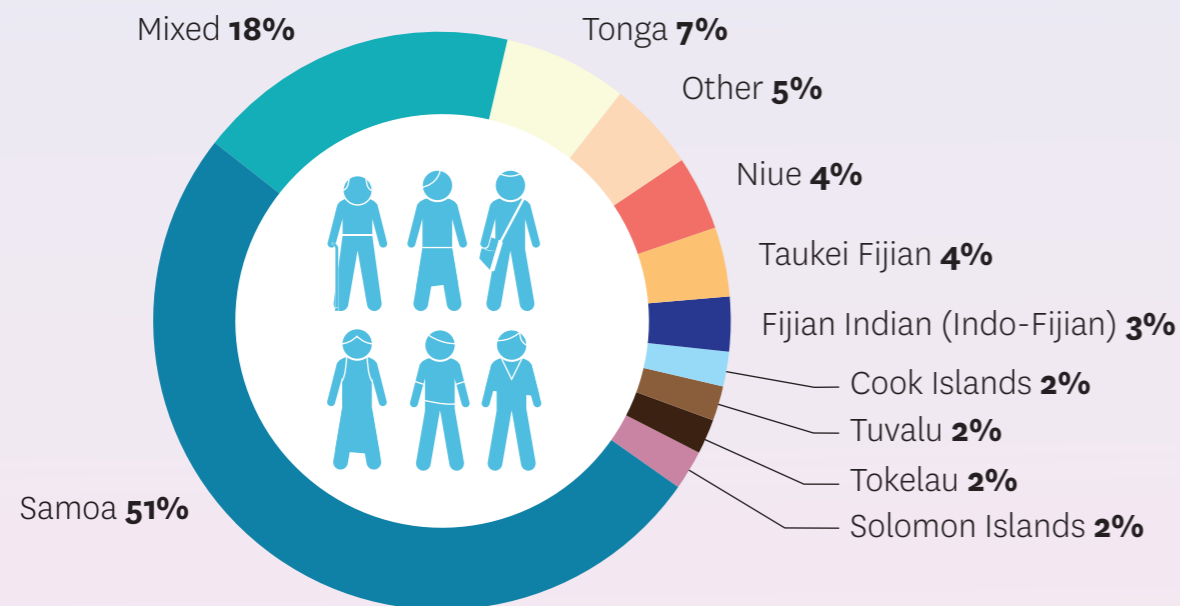
80%

hold at least an undergraduate degree, making it a **very well-qualified workforce**.

95%

are female, making it an **overwhelming majority**, but also includes male and nonbinary/third gender members as well.

## Ethnicities of the Pacific SV workforce in Aotearoa



## Location and roles

63%

are **based in Auckland**, with the remaining based all across Aotearoa.

87%

are mostly employed by a **non-government organisation**.

24%

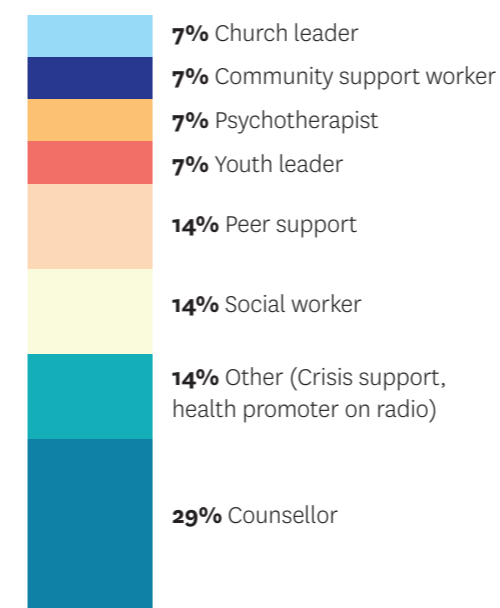
are social workers, with another 24% counsellors, but all are employed in a **variety of roles**.

56%

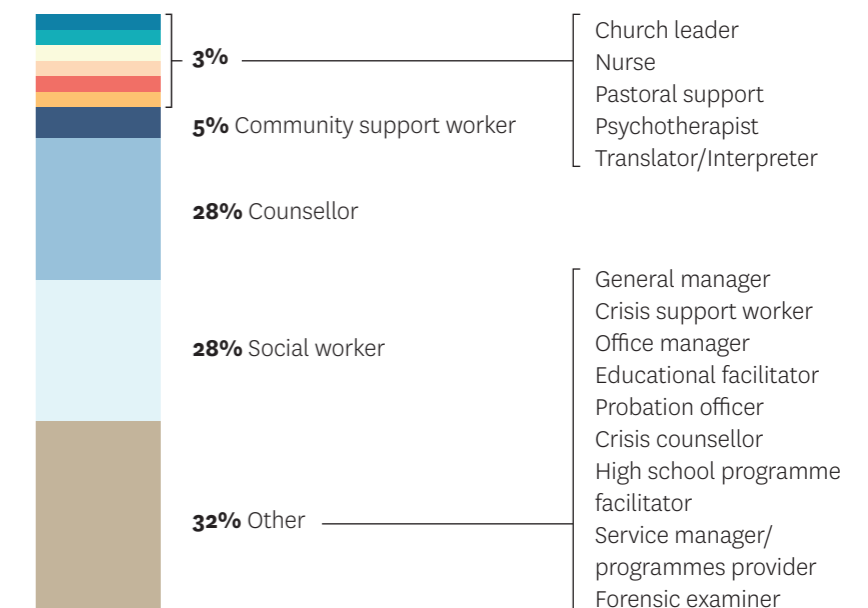
are **relatively new to the workforce**, having worked in the SV sector for two years or less.

## Roles held by past or current members of the Pacific SV workforce

### Past SV workforce members



### Current SV workforce members



(NOTE: percentage decimals have been rounded to nearest whole number)

## Experiences providing SV support

The Pacific SV workforce:

- Intentionally use a wide range of Pacific values, practices, and protocols to inform their work, especially when supporting Pacific peoples affected by SV.
- Find state funding and review systems frustrating and re-traumatising for their Pacific clients.
- Spend a significant amount of time doing pro-bono work to meet the support needs of Pacific clients.
- Support a small clientele of Pacific peoples; those who do present are often Samoan or Tongan, however, have also seen clients from a range of different Pacific ethnicities.

The Pacific SV workforce relies on Pacific values, practices, and protocols in their work. These include the following:



## Values

Vā feiloa'i  
Aiga (family)  
Family  
Hospitality  
Spirituality  
Trust  
Vā  
Cultural values  
Respect  
Forgiveness  
Boundaries  
Communities of support  
Cultural sensitivity  
Cultural competency  
across different cultures

Faith-based values  
Lotu (Christian church, spirituality, faith-based) values  
Alofa (love)  
Tatalo (prayer)  
Ethnic-specific values  
Fa'aaloalo (respect)  
Tautua (service)  
Pasifika values  
Fonofale concepts  
Lalaga (weaving) and malaga (journeying)  
Aga faatamālii (chiefly values; dignified values)

Soalaupule (the sharing of decision-making)  
Saogalemu (safety)  
'Fofu le alamea le alamea' (Samoan proverb – 'solutions lie within')  
Fesoota'iga lelei (good relations/ relationships)



## Practices

Vā feiloa'i  
Vā  
Talanoa (storying; conversational method)  
Use of legends, bible stories, pese (songs)  
Use of alagaupu (proverbs)  
Use of gafa (genealogical knowledge)  
Understanding of 'demigods'  
Aiga  
Family  
Hospitality  
Spirituality

Trust  
"Cultural space"  
Authentic connections  
Uses lived experiences  
Use of Pacific languages  
Cultural practices  
Community of support  
Cultural sensitivity  
Acknowledge cultural diversity and complexity across and within Pacific cultures within practices  
Cultural competency practices across different cultures  
Uses faith-based practices

Uses biblical word-based scriptures  
Ethnic specific practices  
Acknowledging the collective  
Pasifika modalities  
Lalaga le ato (basket weaving)



## Protocols

Vā feiloa'i  
Vā  
Fa'asamoa  
Aiga  
Hospitality  
Spirituality  
Trust

Appropriate use of Pacific languages  
Cultural protocols  
Cultural sensitivity  
Cultural competency across different cultures  
Faith

## Support needs

### The Pacific SV workforce:

- Draw on informal, formal, and pastoral support for self-care
- Joined the workforce to make a positive impact in the healing journey for Pacific peoples affected by SV
- Often leave the sector due to family reasons, but also due to pay issues, burnout and a lack of cultural safety
- Feel isolated and fragmented from other Pacific peoples who work in the SV sector.

## Goals and aspirations

### The Pacific SV workforce desire:

- An increased number of **cultural and clinical supervisors**
- A formal **nation-wide Pacific SV network** to provide support and advocacy for the Pacific SV workforce
- A **multi-service Pacific-led agency** to coordinate Pacific expertise, referrals, client support, and more
- Improved **career prospects and cultural responsiveness training**
- Dedicated **pathways, scholarships, and grants** for Pacific peoples to enter the sector and increase the Pacific SV workforce capacity and capability.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings from the literature review, online survey, and talanoa sessions, in order of priority, the researchers recommend:

2

Research findings be used to inform SV sector planning and investment in workforce development

3

Further research to include a review of the impacts of state funding, reporting, and clinical evaluation processes on the retention of the Pacific SV workforce and the risk of re-traumatising Pacific SV survivors

4

Investment in the growth of the Pacific SV workforce, particularly in expertise of cultural and clinical supervision, and through leadership and professional development pathways

1

The emerging national Pacific SV workforce network be supported to bring the workforce together to advocate for Pacific workers, and explore the viability of a Pacific SV multi-service agency

5

Expansion of the Pacific SV workforce, with a view to wider capabilities and recruiting more males, youth, disabled, and Rainbow+ peoples to serve the specific needs of these intersections.

### Disclaimer

The views and interpretations in this report are those of the researchers and not the official position of the Ministry of Social Development.

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