

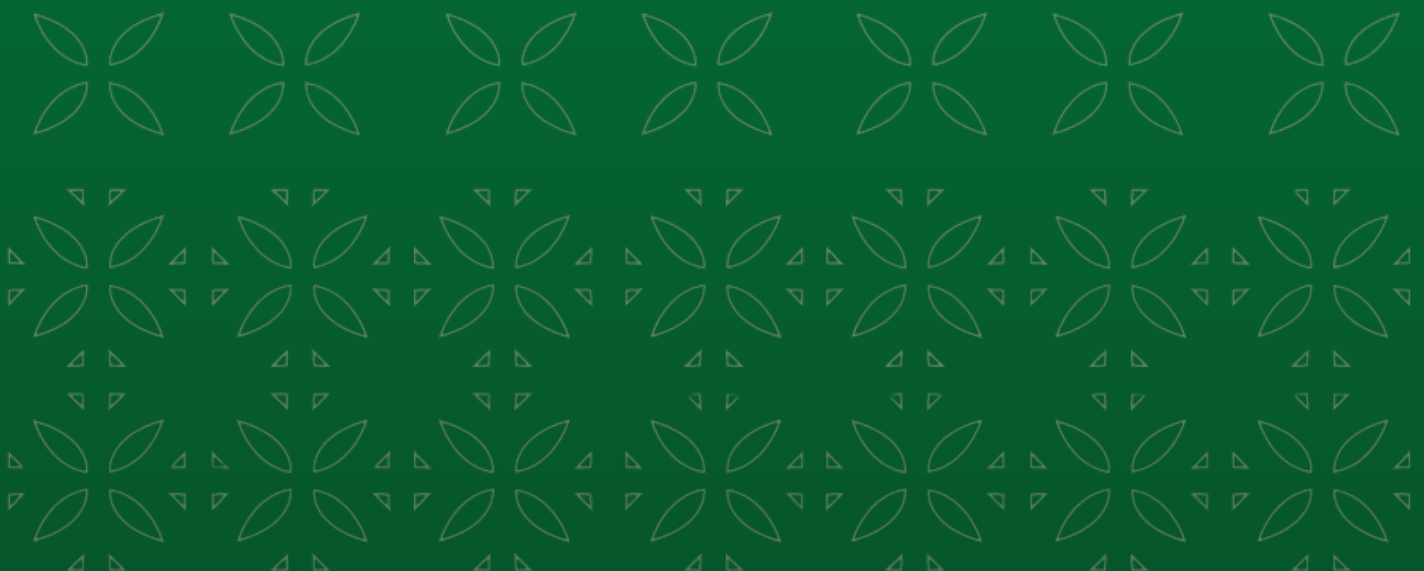


**HANGA-ARO-RAU**  
**Manufacturing, Engineering  
and Logistics**  
Workforce Development Council


# ENABLING THE TĀMAKI MAKĀURAU PACIFIC WORKFORCE

Regional Talanoa Insights Report

REPORT BY: PACIFIC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TEAM







**Ia fa'amalosia tomai o  
le aufaigaluega Pasefika  
ia siitia ai avanoa  
e lē gata i le taimi nei  
ae mo le lumana'i**

**A stronger Pacific workforce  
with better opportunities  
now and in the future**



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## INTRODUCTION



This report presents the insights gathered from the **Enabling the Tāmaki Makaurau Pacific Workforce Talanoa Event**, a talanoa between industry professionals and leaders, educators, community stakeholders, and Year 10 Pacific learners from Tāmaki College. This aligned with the actions in the Lumana’i o Tangata Moana Action Plan and aimed to foster collaboration and cultural alignment in education and workforce development. The event was held on 26 November, 2024 at John Cassidy Recreation Centre, Tāmaki College.

Through the talanoa, attendees explored ways to support Pacific workforce development, amplify success stories, and address systemic challenges within the vocational education and training (VET) system. The event also created a vital space to hear directly from Pacific learners, whose voices and aspirations are central to shaping targeted, culturally responsive, and inclusive pathways.

Additionally, the talanoa generated insights that will inform the creation of a comprehensive Education and Career Pathways Guide to support Pacific learners with accessible and actionable information.

This report highlights key themes, challenges, and actionable strategies to drive systemic improvements. It aims to inspire and guide initiatives that unlock opportunities for Pacific learners and workers in the manufacturing, engineering, and logistics sectors across Aotearoa.



## ABOUT THE EVENT



The Enabling the Pacific Tāmaki Makaurau Workforce Talanoa Event brought together Pacific voices from industry, education, and the community to explore workforce development, skill-building, and education pathways for Pacific learners and workers. Through the Industry Panel, Provider Panel, and Pathways Talanoa, meaningful discussions addressed barriers, shared best practices, and developed actionable solutions. Contributions from participants and learners highlighted the importance of collaboration and cultural responsiveness in creating equitable pathways to education and employment. The event concluded with motivational speaker Caleb Va’a, whose inspiring message of perseverance, love, and resilience encouraged attendees to embrace challenges and strive for success. His words left everyone inspired to make a positive impact in whatever goals they are striving toward. This event was a collaboration with the wider Hanga-Aro-Rau organisation, including Industry Managers, the Marketing and Communications, and the Pathways team, working together to ensure its success.

Several key documents were used to guide the discussions, plenary sessions, and event activities, ensuring a focused and informed approach to achieving the event's objectives while aligning with existing action plans and strategies:

- [Lumana'i o Tangata Moana Action Plan](#) advocates for the interests of the Pacific workforce within Hanga-Aro-Rau industries to influence positive systemic change across vocational education and training. The Plan provides confidence to our stakeholders and partners that Hanga-Aro-Rau is a strong, informed, and reliable source of support for the Pacific workforce.
- [Employment Action Plan](#) outlines the Government's vision for a thriving labour market, connecting people with meaningful employment opportunities while boosting Aotearoa New Zealand's economic performance.
- [Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020–2030](#) outlines the Government's dedication to improving outcomes for Pacific learners and their families.
- [The Pacific Employment Action Plan](#) outlines the Government's approach to supporting Pacific communities in achieving their goals for shared prosperity, meaningful employment, entrepreneurship, and business ownership.

## Industry Panel

The Industry Panel brought together leading Pacific voices to explore key workforce development strategies. Moderated by Vaivaimalemalu Fred Luatua (Hanga-Aro-Rau Pacific Workforce Development Team Lead), the panel provided insights on supporting Pacific workers in skill development, retaining talent, and preparing for technology-driven industry shifts. This session was vital for understanding barriers, sharing success stories, examples of good practice and crafting solutions that integrated Pacific perspectives, aspirations and needs. Hearing directly from Pacific people in our industries ensured that actions and solutions were informed, inclusive, and impactful for Pacific. The panel included:

- Bonita Misilisi, Kaiwhakawhanake ā Pouarahi (Learning & Development Lead), Fulton Hogan Ltd
- Morris Misilisi\*, Senior Supervisor, Link Alliance
- Paul White, Manager Māori Outcomes, Ports of Auckland



## Education Provider Panel

The Provider Panel highlighted the critical role of education providers in preparing Pacific learners for future workforce demands. The panel was moderated by Manaini Cama (Pacific Workforce Development Lead) and featured insights from leaders across education sectors on fostering industry-aligned learning, co-developing programs, and addressing gaps in resources and support. Hearing from education providers at all levels of education supports the pursuit of culturally responsive approaches that help Pacific learners thrive whilst learning and creating equitable pathways for success in both education and employment. The panel included:

- Aiono Manu Fa'aea, Senior Pasifika Manager, Manukau Institute of Technology
- Lulu Lutui, Industry Training Business Partner (including Pacific Portfolio), Competenz
- Pasitaua Haufano, Founder & CEO, Zeducation
- Russel Dunn, Deputy Principal (Partnerships and Pathways), Tāmaki College.



## Pathways Talanoa

The Talanoa Session fostered meaningful dialogue between Tāmaki College Year 10 Pacific learners and industry and education professionals. It aimed to equip learners with practical insights into career pathways, skills, education and subject requirements, and growth opportunities. The session provided critical input for developing the Education and Career Pathway Guide, ensuring it reflects the unique needs and aspirations of Pacific learners. The talanoa was a collaboration between the Hanga-Aro-Rau Pacific and Pathways Team and facilitated by Mele Siakumi Kautoke (Pacific Workforce Development Lead).



\*Morris Misilisi's participation in the panel discussion is conducted in his personal capacity and does not necessarily represent the views, policies, or official position of Link Alliance.



# KEY CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS



Pacific workers and learners face a range of interconnected challenges that hinder their progress and success in education and employment. The challenges addressed by the participants during plenary sessions and throughout the event included systemic barriers, cultural misalignment, limited access to training and mentorship, and socioeconomic constraints. Addressing these issues is essential to fostering an equitable and inclusive environment.

## Challenges facing the Pacific workforce

### *Limited Access to Tailored Training Programs*

Pacific workers often lack culturally relevant training in technical, literacy, numeracy, and digital skills, hindering career progression and preparation for advanced, technology-driven roles.

### *Imposter Syndrome and Cultural Barriers*

Many Pacific workers experience self-doubt and cultural challenges, which can affect confidence in pursuing leadership or higher-paid roles. Traditional workplace norms often clash with communal Pacific values, creating additional stress and reducing engagement.

### *Limited Access to Mentorship and Networking Opportunities*

There is an absence of structured mentorship programs for Pacific workers. Mentorship is critical for navigating career pathways, building confidence, and addressing challenges unique to Pacific communities.

### *Lack of Representation in Leadership and Higher-Level Roles*

Pacific workers are underrepresented in decision-making and leadership roles due to biases and limited development opportunities, perpetuating inequities and reduces the visibility of Pacific voices in shaping industry practices.

### *Limited Awareness of Career Opportunities*

Pacific learners and workers lack exposure to career opportunities in manufacturing, engineering, and logistics, emphasising the need for industry-led programs and early skill-building and access initiatives.

### *Systemic Biases in Recruitment and Advancement*

Recruitment and promotion processes often unintentionally overlook Pacific candidates, perpetuating cycles of underrepresentation and lack of cultural diversity in strategic and leadership roles.



## Challenges facing Pacific learners

### *Transition from High School to Tertiary Education and Employment*

Pacific learners often lack support transitioning from high school to tertiary education or employment, impacting readiness, confidence, and adapting to higher education and workplace expectations.

### *Digital Divide and Access to Technology*

Many Pacific learners face challenges accessing the technology and digital tools necessary for modern education and training. This digital divide limits their ability to develop essential digital literacy skills, participate in online learning, and compete in increasingly tech-driven academic and professional environments.

### *Socioeconomic Barriers*

Financial constraints significantly limit access to higher education and vocational training for Pacific learners. Targeted scholarships and funding opportunities are often insufficient to meet needs, hindering their ability to pursue further education or specialised training.

### *Literacy and Numeracy Gaps*

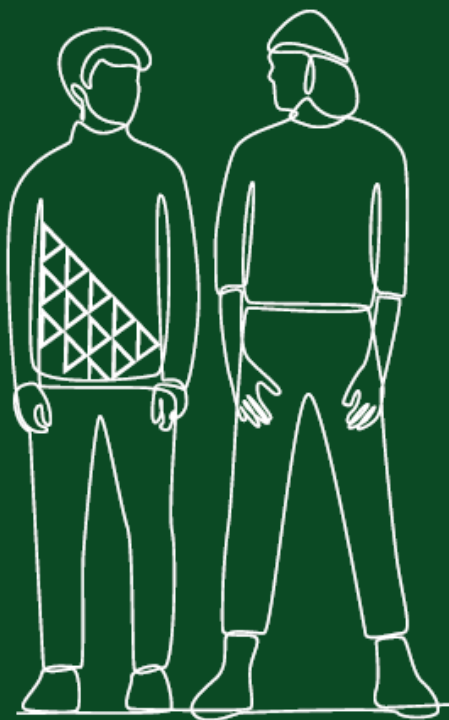
English literacy and numeracy skill gaps are significant challenges for Pacific learners and workers. These foundational skills are essential for meaningful engagement in education and training, and gaps in these areas can hinder their ability to fully participate and succeed in academic and vocational education settings.

### *Limited Access to Mentorship and Role Models*

There is a shortage of mentorship programs and role models who share Pacific learners' cultural and educational experiences and challenges. This gap diminishes opportunities for targeted and specific guidance, networking, and inspiration for future career paths.

### *Lack of Awareness about Career Pathways*

Many Pacific learners and their families lack awareness about viable career pathways and the steps needed to achieve them. This issue is compounded by insufficient outreach and information-sharing initiatives tailored to Pacific communities by industry and education providers.





# INSIGHTS FROM THE INDUSTRY PLENARY SESSION



These are insights from a panel made up of Māori and Pacific industry leaders that explored three critical questions concerning Pacific workforce development:

- How can we better support Pacific workers in skill development?
- What are key strategies for retaining Pacific talent in the workforce?
- What skills will be essential for Pacific workers to thrive in the changing landscape of industries due to technological advancements?

The discussion emphasised actionable strategies, highlighted challenges, and underscored the importance of stakeholder collaboration to foster a thriving Pacific workforce.

## How can we better support Pacific workers in skill development?

**Culturally Inclusive Training Programs**  
Design training initiatives that incorporate Pacific cultural values and practices. A culturally inclusive approach fosters stronger engagement, makes learning more meaningful, and strengthens workers' sense of identity and belonging.

**Comprehensive Holistic Support**  
Offer a well-rounded support system for Pacific workers. By addressing personal and professional challenges, workers can focus on their skill development without the added stress of external pressures.

**Clear Pathways to Advancement**  
Establish transparent career pathways that enable Pacific workers to progress into leadership and specialised roles. This approach inspires ambition, prevents stagnation in lower-level positions, and diversifies the workforce at higher levels.

**Collaborative Industry-Education Partnerships**  
Encourage collaboration between industries and educational providers to co-create relevant curricula. Aligning training with workplace demands equips workers with practical, employable skills while bridging gaps between education and industry.

**Prioritising Foundational Skills**  
Invest in literacy and numeracy, as well as digital and soft skills development alongside technical skill development. Strengthening these foundational skills supports workers in thriving in roles that require precision, communication, and analytical thinking, particularly in industries like engineering, manufacturing and logistics.

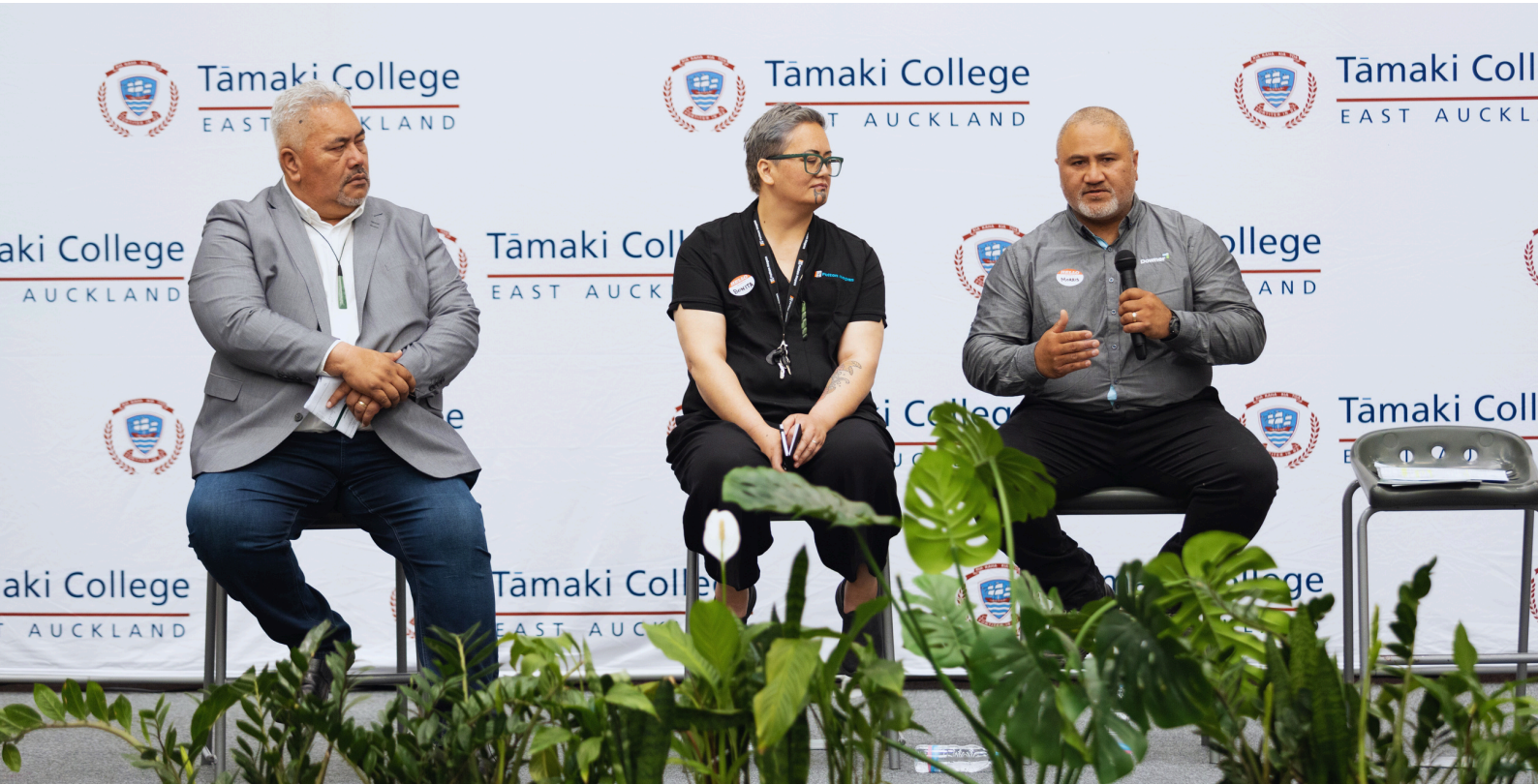
**Commitment to Lifelong Learning**  
Support continuous skill development through structured programs, incentives, and accessible learning opportunities. Lifelong learning ensures workers remain adaptable in an ever-evolving industry shaped by technological advancements.

**Engagement with Pacific-Led Training Providers**  
Partner with organisations that understand Pacific communities and offer culturally resonant training programs. These providers are uniquely positioned to deliver impactful learning experiences tailored to the needs of Pacific workers.

**Digital Upskilling for the Future**  
Prioritise digital literacy and technology-focused training to prepare workers for tech-driven industries. Enhancing digital competencies equips Pacific workers to excel in roles involving automation, data analysis, and emerging technologies.

**Showcasing Success Stories**  
Celebrate and promote the achievements of Pacific workers who have advanced through skill development initiatives. Sharing these success stories inspires others, highlights the impact of effective programs, and reinforces the value of workforce investment.

**Post-Training Guidance and Support**  
Implement follow-up initiatives such as coaching, mentorship, and resources to help workers effectively apply newly acquired skills. Post-training support ensures a seamless transition from learning to practical application.



## How can we better support Pacific workers in skill development?

### Fostering Inclusive Organisational Cultures

Develop diversity training and create spaces where Pacific values and voices are heard and celebrated. Inclusive cultures reduce discrimination, foster belonging, and encourage retention by making employees feel respected and valued.

### Implementing Mentorship Programs

Pair Pacific employees with mentors who offer career guidance and growth opportunities. Mentorship builds confidence, facilitates knowledge transfer, and provides vital support during career transitions, improving retention.

### Providing Clear Pathways to Higher-Skilled and Higher-Paid Roles

Develop transparent criteria for promotions and career advancement alongside training programs for higher-skilled, specialised and leadership roles. Addressing systemic biases ensures Pacific workers can access growth opportunities, career advancements, foster motivation, increase earning potential, and enhance workforce equity and progress.

### Establishing Pacific-Specific Staff Networks

Form Pacific networks to provide peer support and foster community within organisations. These networks build connections, strengthen cultural identity, and enhance workplace satisfaction, directly contributing to retention.

### Tailored Professional Development Programs

Offer programs focusing on Pacific workers' unique needs, such as leadership skills or digital literacy. Personalised growth opportunities show commitment to employee advancement, building trust and long-term loyalty.

### Flexible Work Arrangements

Provide adaptable schedules and remote options to accommodate family and community responsibilities, enhancing workers satisfaction and well-being. For the workplace, flexibility improves productivity, reduces absenteeism, and fosters loyalty, creating a mutually beneficial environment where employees thrive, and organisational goals are consistently met.



## What skills will be essential for Pacific workers to thrive in the changing landscape in our industries due to the impact of technology advancements?

Pacific workers will need to develop technical, digital, and soft skills to thrive in the rapidly changing landscape of industries influenced by technological advancements. At the foundation of all this is proficiency in English literacy skills, which are essential for workplace communication and engagement in education and training. The integration of automation, artificial intelligence, and digital tools across sectors demands a workforce that is both adaptable and proficient in new technologies while maintaining critical interpersonal and cultural strengths.

Key skills include:

### Problem-Solving and Critical Thinking

As automation handles routine tasks, the ability to analyse complex problems and devise innovative solutions becomes a key differentiator. These skills are crucial for Pacific workers in decision-making and higher-skilled roles.

### Adaptability and Resilience

The ability to learn, unlearn, and relearn is critical in industries where technological advancements frequently disrupt traditional methods. Workers need to remain adaptable, embracing changes and new tools with confidence.

### Digital Literacy

As industries adopt advanced technologies, Pacific workers need foundational skills in digital platforms, tools, and software. Digital literacy enables workers to navigate and use technology in diverse roles, from manufacturing to logistics and beyond.

### Technical Proficiency in Emerging Technologies

Proficiency in areas such as robotics, automation, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, and data analytics is becoming increasingly essential. Specific roles in the manufacturing, engineering and logistics industry require advanced technical expertise to meet the demands of the evolving workplace.

### Communication and Collaboration

Strong interpersonal skills, including effective communication and teamwork, ensure Pacific workers can collaborate in increasingly diverse and tech-driven work environments. These abilities are especially valuable in industries requiring cross-functional coordination.

### Leadership and Cultural Intelligence

Leadership skills, including cultural understanding and responsiveness, will allow Pacific workers to thrive in managerial and community-oriented roles. These skills are crucial for addressing workplace diversity and fostering inclusion in technology-rich environments.

To support Pacific workers acquiring these skills, industries and educational providers must collaborate to design industry-responsive and culturally tailored training programs. These initiatives must integrate mentorship, post-training support, and pathways to advanced roles, ensuring Pacific workers are equipped to excel in the technology-driven future.



## Call to Action

A strong call to action for stakeholders across government, industry, education and training providers and community organisations to take collaborative and tangible steps to support Pacific workers in adapting to and excelling in the evolving workforce and industry. Emphasis was placed on the need for collaborative efforts that actively centre the voices and needs of Pacific workers that ultimately benefit industry and the Aotearoa New Zealand economy:

- **Forge Strong Partnerships:** Stakeholders were urged to build robust partnerships that prioritise the empowerment of Pacific workers. This involves co-designing initiatives that address unique challenges and opportunities, ensuring Pacific perspectives and cultural values are integral to decision-making processes.
- **Invest in Long-Term Workforce Development:** Emphasis on the importance of designing and funding sustainable workforce development plans that align with demographic trends and projected industry growth. Such plans should include targeted training programs, leadership pathways, and a focus on emerging industries to equip Pacific workers for long-term success.
- **Celebrate and Promote Success Stories:** Stakeholders were encouraged to showcase the achievements of Pacific workers who have advanced in their careers. Highlighting role models and success stories can inspire the younger Pacific generation to see themselves in high-skilled, leadership, and specialised roles, fostering motivation and ambition.
- **Commit to Lifelong Learning Initiatives:** Recognising the rapidly changing demands of modern industries, this is a call to action to prioritise ongoing learning and development opportunities. Stakeholders must ensure Pacific workers have continuous access to upskilling programs, particularly in areas such as digital literacy, advanced technologies, and leadership.

The session emphasised that these actions are not just beneficial for Pacific workers but also critical for Aotearoa New Zealand's overall economic and social prosperity. By fostering inclusivity, adaptability, and innovation, stakeholders can create a resilient workforce that thrives in an increasingly technology-driven and globalised environment. The urgency to act now was underscored, as investing in Pacific talent today will ensure Pacific are positioned to lead and contribute significantly to tomorrow's industries.





# INSIGHTS FROM THE PROVIDER PLENARY SESSION



The plenary session brought together leaders from across the education sector to explore both the challenges faced by Pacific learners and strategies to improve their educational and career opportunities and outcomes. Panellists addressed three critical questions:

- How can education better prepare Pacific learners for evolving industries?
- How can education providers and industries co-develop successful training programs?
- What additional resources or partnerships are needed to enhance learning and development?

The session highlighted innovative and collaborative solutions to overcome barriers while fostering culturally responsive, industry-aligned pathways for Pacific learners.

## How can education more effectively prepare Pacific learners to meet future skill demands, enabling them to enter and succeed in industries that are continuously evolving due to technological advancements?

### Strengthen Industry-Education Partnerships

Foster collaborations between education providers and industries to co-design training programs that align with industry demands. For instance, industry representatives can provide insights into upcoming technological trends, ensuring that learners acquire skills relevant to industry demands.

### Integrate Digital Literacy into Core Learning

Equip Pacific learners with essential digital skills to prepare them for rapidly evolving industries. Programmes and learning should focus on practical applications, such as using digital tools for problem-solving and collaboration, ensuring learners can adapt to new technologies.

### Address Gaps in Foundational Skills

Focus on improving literacy and numeracy in Pacific learners through culturally responsive and learner-centred teaching methods. Embedding these skills in vocational and technical training ensures learners are workforce-ready and ready for further education and training.

### Promote Work-Integrated Learning Opportunities

Develop work-integrated learning, apprenticeships, and hands-on projects in partnership with businesses. Examples include school-based projects where learners apply technical, literacy, numeracy and soft skills in real-world contexts.

### Introduce Targeted Financial Literacy Programs

Provide budgeting, saving, and financial planning training to help Pacific learners manage resources effectively and make informed decisions about further education and career paths.

### Embed Future-Oriented Skills in Programmes

Incorporate critical thinking, adaptability, and resilience into learning. These soft skills complement technical expertise and prepare learners to navigate complex, tech-driven work environments.

### Enhance Educator Capability and Capacity

Offer professional development for educators to stay updated on technological advancements, industry practices, and cultural competency. This ensures they can deliver future-relevant education while fostering an inclusive learning environment that acknowledges and respects Pacific learners' cultural identities, values, and contexts. Educators can better engage learners and support their educational and career aspirations by integrating cultural responsiveness into teaching practices.

### Leverage Cultural Competency in Learning Design

Incorporate Pacific values, languages, and contexts into learning materials and teaching practices. This approach fosters inclusivity and engagement, ensuring learners feel supported, seen and acknowledged in their educational journeys.

### Support Lifelong Learning and Upskilling

Create pathways for continuous education, including micro-credentials and short courses, to help Pacific workers upskill and stay competitive in their fields as industries evolve.

### Expand Mentorship and Networking Opportunities

Connect Pacific learners with industry mentors who share similar cultural backgrounds or experiences. This fosters guidance, inspiration, and practical insights into career pathways.



## How can education providers and industry co-develop programmes/learning/training for Pacific or any learner success?

**Collaboratively Identify Skill Gaps:** Education providers and industry partners can jointly assess current and future workforce needs to identify critical skill gaps and use data-driven approaches to help target specific training needs.

**Co-Design Culturally Responsive Education and Learning Programmes:** Collaborate to create learning programmes that integrate industry requirements with Pacific cultural contexts. Including Pacific values and perspectives fosters inclusivity and increases learner engagement, making training more relevant and accessible.

**Establish Work-Integrated Learning Opportunities:** Develop programs like internships, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training in partnership with industries. These opportunities provide learners with hands-on experience while meeting employer needs for workforce-ready candidates.

**Develop Mentorship Programs:** Create mentorship initiatives connecting Pacific learners with industry professionals. Mentors can guide learners through their careers, providing insights into workplace expectations and professional growth.

**Align Programs with Emerging Technologies:** Partner with industries to ensure learning and training programs incorporate the latest technological advancements. For example, integrate digital literacy, cybersecurity, and AI skills into learning modules, which help prepare learners for evolving job markets.

**Provide Industry-Led Workshops and Training:** Invite industry experts to conduct workshops or guest lectures, giving learners direct exposure to real-world applications. This partnership bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical industry requirements.

**Offer Flexible Learning Pathways:** Design training programs that accommodate diverse learner needs, such as part-time courses, micro-credentials, and online learning modules. Flexibility ensures that learners can upskill while balancing personal and professional commitments.

**Utilise Industry Partnerships to Access Resources:** Leverage industry resources, such as equipment, technology, and facilities, to enhance training quality. This partnership can reduce costs for education providers while improving learners' access to technology, resources, and tools needed for learning.

**Promote Pathways to Employment:** Collaborate with industries to establish clear pathways for learners to transition from training to employment. Co-develop programmes that include job placements or internship-to-hire pipelines, fostering confidence and reducing barriers to workforce entry.

## What additional support, resources or partnerships would enable you to enhance learning and development opportunities for Pacific learners?

### Industry Partnerships for Shared Resources and Apprenticeships

Foster collaborations with industries to share resources, such as technology, tools, and facilities, for training programs. Create apprenticeship and internship opportunities tailored to Pacific learners, ensuring they gain hands-on experience and develop relevant skills while being supported culturally.

### Partnerships Between Schools, Providers, and Industry

Build strong collaborations between schools, tertiary institutions, and industries to create seamless educational pathways. These partnerships can co-design curricula, provide concurrent enrolment opportunities, and ensure learners are exposed to industry standards early in their education.

### Micro-Credential Pathways for Upskilling

Create short, targeted courses in high-demand skills, such as data analytics or supply chain management. These programs should be co-designed with industry partners and cater to flexible schedules to accommodate Pacific learners balancing work and family.

### Industry-Focused Career Events in Pacific Communities

Host career events in Pacific communities, showcasing job opportunities in the manufacturing, engineering and logistics industries. Include Pacific professionals and mentors to inspire learners and provide practical career guidance.

### Dedicated Industry-Partnership Scholarships

Establish scholarships funded by industry partners specifically for Pacific learners pursuing careers in high-demand fields. Scholarships should include mentorship and work experience opportunities to maximise impact.

### Community-Led Learning Hubs

Establish local learning hubs run by Pacific community leaders and educators. These hubs can provide tutoring, access to technology, and cultural mentorship, ensuring learners receive support in a culturally familiar environment.

### Culturally Responsive Financial Literacy Programs

Develop financial literacy programs tailored to Pacific learners, integrating cultural contexts such as communal values, money management, savings, and community contributions. These programs can empower learners to manage their education and career expenses effectively while providing guidance on accessing scholarships and funding opportunities, ensuring financial support and informed decision-making.

### School-to-Work Transition Programmes

Partner with industries to create structured transition programs, including pre-apprenticeships, internships, and mentorship opportunities. These pathways should include cultural support elements to ensure learners feel confident and prepared.

### Parent, Family and Community Engagement Programs

Develop programs to involve Pacific families in learners' education, such as workshops that explain educational pathways, career opportunities, and the importance of future-focused skills. This will strengthen family support for learners and bridge generational knowledge gaps.

### Customised Digital Literacy Initiatives

Implement digital literacy programs tailored to Pacific learners, focusing on practical skills like using online tools for education and career advancement.





## Call to Action

These call-to-action points emerged from the plenary session, focusing on enhancing learning and development opportunities for Pacific learners. They emphasise building industry-education partnerships, fostering culturally responsive support systems, and creating targeted programs that bridge skill gaps, promote career pathways, and empower lifelong learning for Pacific communities in evolving industries.

- **Strengthen Cross-Sector Collaboration:** Establish actions and strategies for collaboration between education providers, industry leaders, Pacific communities, and government agencies. This should focus on aligning resources, policies, and initiatives to ensure that Pacific learners have equitable access to education and career opportunities tailored to future workforce needs.
- **Prioritise Data-Driven Interventions:** Base interventions and actions on data to identify barriers and gaps and track progress for Pacific learners across education and employment pathways. Use these insights to inform evidence-based practices, actions and targeted interventions that address systemic challenges and maximise the impact of resources.
- **Promote Cultural Competency Across All Educational Levels:** Have cultural competency training available to educators, industry, and stakeholders. This ensures that Pacific learners feel supported, understood, and included, fostering engagement and retention in education and training programs.



# EDUCATION AND CAREER PATHWAYS TALANOA



## Insights from the Learner Talanoa

The following insights were gathered from the talanoa session involving Year 10 Pacific students of Tāmaki College, industry professionals, educators, and community members. These insights highlight key education, skills, and career development themes, providing valuable perspectives for creating meaningful pathways for Pacific learners. The discussions highlighted the importance of aligning education with real-world opportunities, fostering adaptability, and leveraging storytelling and mentorship to inspire and guide learners toward informed and fulfilling career choices.

**Learners expressed a strong interest in the practical applications of school subjects in real-world careers.** This included a desire to understand how subjects are helpful and translate into workplace skills and opportunities.

**Uncertainty regarding career paths and a need for targeted guidance were highlighted.** Many learners reported feeling overwhelmed by the range of career options and say they need advice to help identify strengths, interests, and suitable career pathways.

**Employers emphasised the importance of soft skills such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, critical thinking and collaboration.** These skills were identified as essential for success in diverse and changing workplace environments.

**Learners expressed a need for clear information regarding career progression and salary expectations.** Transparency in outlining career milestones and financial considerations was identified as a key requirement for informed decision-making.

**High value was placed on internships and hands-on experiences.** These opportunities were recognised for its role in providing real-world exposure, building confidence, and enabling the practical application of concepts learned in a classroom.

**Technological skills were noted as increasingly indispensable across industries.** Industry employers emphasised the relevance of digital literacy, data analysis, and AI and automation skills, even in fields not traditionally associated with technology.

**Learners were curious about the long-term viability of career paths in an ever-changing job market.** They raised questions about the impact of automation, globalisation, and other disruptive trends on the sustainability of specific roles and professions.

**Certifications and training programs that boost employability emerged as a significant focus area.** Clear and accessible information about industry-recognised credentials and qualifications valued by employers is essential for informed career planning and skill development.

**Adaptability was identified as a critical trait for success in rapidly evolving industries.** Employers and educators highlighted the importance of flexibility and a willingness to learn new skills to maintain competitiveness and progress in their careers.

**Work and education programmes aligned with personal passions and hobbies were identified as areas of interest.** Many learners expressed a preference for careers that provide both meaning and personal fulfilment.

**Learning from failures and challenges was highlighted as a key factor in career growth.** Stories shared illustrated the value of resilience and the lessons derived from setbacks.

**Industry-specific websites and tools, which can help users make informed career and education choices, were identified as key valuable resources.** Access to credible information was essential for effective self-guided career planning and informed choices.

**Employers and educators strongly encouraged proactive learning and staying updated with emerging trends.** Continuous engagement with new technologies was identified as a strategy for accessing opportunities and career progress.

**Career journey stories provided relatable inspiration for learners.** Stories of diverse pathways and perseverance offered motivation and a sense of possibility. Sharing these stories more widely should be actively encouraged, as they play a vital role in guiding and inspiring informed career choices.

## Elements to Include in an Educational and Career Pathway Guide

The insights presented here were gathered through talanoa sessions with Year 10 learners and event participants to shape the development of an Education and Career Pathways Guide. This initiative aligns with the Lumana'i o Tangata Moana action of creating comprehensive, clear, and targeted Education and Career Pathways guides. The goal is to provide accessible and impactful resources that support Pacific learners in making well-informed education and career decisions.

- **Role overview:** A brief description of the role, including key responsibilities, expectations around working hours, flexibility etc.
- **Required subject choices:** Recommended school subjects (e.g., STEM subjects for engineering, arts for design).
- **Education and training requirements:** Detailed information on the qualifications or certifications needed.
- **Pathway map:** A visual roadmap showing the progression from school to the role, including educational milestones.
- **Earning potential:** Information on starting salaries, average incomes, and earning progression within the field.
- **Skill requirements:** Key skills needed for the role, including technical, soft, and transferable skills.
- **Profiles of people in the role:** Stories of professionals in the job, highlighting their career journey and experiences.
- **Day in the life:** A typical workday or week described to give a realistic view of the role.
- **Job opportunities:** Information on job availability, demand, and trends within the industry.
- **Industry insights:** Emerging trends, technological impacts, and future growth prospects for the field.
- **Work environment:** Description of typical workplaces, including physical and remote working options.
- **Internships and work experience:** Opportunities for gaining hands-on experience and building networks.
- **Mentorship opportunities:** Information on mentorship programs or how to find a mentor in the field.
- **Certifications and licenses:** List of certifications that can enhance employability or are required for the role.
- **Career advancement:** Insights into progressing within the role and related leadership opportunities.
- **Educational institutions:** Recommended schools, institutions, polytechnics, or training providers offering relevant courses.
- **Scholarship and funding options:** Financial aid opportunities specific to the field.
- **Tools and technology:** Key tools, software, or equipment commonly used in the job.
- **Job portals and recruitment platforms:** Links to sites where job postings for the role are available.
- **Professional associations and networking tips:** Relevant industry bodies and organizations to join for resources and support.
- **Visuals:** Infographics, charts, and diagrams to visually explain career pathways and key information.
- **Interactive elements:** Quizzes or assessments to help learners gauge their interest and suitability for the role.
- **Real-world applications:** Examples of how the role impacts everyday life or solves problems.
- **Challenges and rewards:** Examples and stories of the challenges and benefits of working in the role.
- **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):** Common questions about the role and pathway.
- **Contact information:** How to reach educational institutions, industry mentors, or career advisors for further guidance.
- **Links to more resources:** Curated online resources, videos, and articles for deeper career exploration.



# MOVING FORWARD



**la fa'amalosia tomai o le afaigaluega Pasefika ia siitia ai avanoa e lē gata i le taimi nei ae mo le lumana'i**  
A stronger Pacific workforce with better opportunities now and in the future



As we publish this Talanoa Insights report, Hanga-Aro-Rau, alongside other Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), is being disestablished and replaced by up to eight Industry Skills Boards (ISBs) as part of broader Vocational Education and Training (VET) system reforms. Although the system is evolving, the challenges and opportunities highlighted in this report remain. The Pacific workforce continues to play a vital role in industries that drive and strengthen Aotearoa New Zealand's economy.

The latest census reveals a 16.9% increase in the Pacific population, growing from 381,642 in 2018 to 442,632. In the manufacturing, engineering, and logistics industries, over 53,000 Pacific workers contribute their skills and dedication, with manufacturing employing the highest number of Pacific men and the third-highest number of Pacific women. In 2023, Auckland's Pacific population is now over 275,000, making up 16.6% of the region's total population—an increase from 15.5% in 2018. With a median age of 24.9 years, the Pacific community remains significantly younger than Auckland's overall median of 35.9 years. Employment among Pacific Peoples in Auckland averaged 112,682, reflecting a 9.2% increase from the previous year.

Across Aotearoa New Zealand, Pacific Peoples contribute an estimated \$8 billion to the country's GDP, highlighting growing economic impact and workforce presence. These numbers reflect not only the Pacific workforce's economic contribution but also the opportunity to uplift Pacific communities and create better futures for families across Aotearoa.

This report amplifies the collective wisdom of Pacific communities, industry, and education providers—voices essential in shaping a more inclusive and effective VET system. Their insights call for action to support the Pacific workforce and drive meaningful change. A key example of collaboration and meaningful action is the partnership formed between an employer and a high school at the Tāmaki Makaurau event. This partnership showcases the importance of hearing diverse voices and demonstrates the power of working together to create opportunities, strengthen career pathways, and support the future successes of Pacific learners and workers.

Hanga-Aro-Rau will use these findings to advocate for a system that better serves Pacific workers - one that supports stronger career and education pathways and better opportunities and drives meaningful actions to contribute to a stronger Pacific workforce with better opportunities now and in the future as they continue to contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand's economy.

*Hanga-Aro-Rau sincerely thanks the participants of the Tāmaki Makaurau Talanoa event for generously sharing your knowledge and experiences. Your insights are invaluable in shaping a stronger, more inclusive future for the Pacific workforce. Malo 'aupito! Vinaka vakalevu!*

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