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Pacific Islanders in Regional Victoria Final Project Report


Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic
Communities Council

September 2019



Research Team

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Partner Organisations:

Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) & Mallee Sports Assembly

Funding Sources

Australian Research Council Linkage grant (2015-2019)

La Trobe University Research Focus Area – Transforming Human Societies (2014-2018)

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Project website: <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/social-inquiry/research/current-research-projects/pacific-islanders-in-regional-victoria-visitors-migrants-and-overstayers>

Find us on Facebook: Pacific Islanders in Regional Victoria: a research project
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Pacific Islanders in Regional Victoria

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Research project overview: This project explored the socio-economic status and well-being of Pacific Islander migrants in rural northwest Victoria, focusing on the towns of Mildura and Robinvale in the Sunraysia region. It addressed five key research questions:

1. What are the implications for Pacific Islander communities in the region of their involvement with horticultural industries?
2. What issues do Pacific Islanders face in mobilising social capital and accessing public services?
3. What are the experiences and future aspirations of Pacific Islander youth in the region?
4. What is the nature of Pacific Islanders' relationships with other ethnic groups in the region?
5. What trans-local and transnational networks do Pacific Islanders in the region maintain?

Key Recommendations

OVERALL, we recommend the establishment of a peak body to represent Pacific people in Sunraysia, supported by organisations such as SMECC, to give them a greater voice in the community, improve their opportunities and help address the many challenges and structural barriers they face.

✓ **Employment:** Pacific settlers in Sunraysia need more secure employment rather than relying on seasonal work; they also need to be given more opportunities for adult education leading to new forms of employment within horticultural and other industries. Structural barriers to employment need to be addressed.

✓ **Education:** Pacific liaison workers are urgently needed to help connect schools with the families of Pacific students and work to improve their educational outcomes, including greater access to TAFE and university. Earlier intervention at the primary school level is also necessary to support Pacific children's learning especially their literacy and numeracy skills.

✓ **Youth:** Significant work is needed to improve social cohesion in the region in order to increase Pacific young people's sense of belonging and inclusion. Incentives for employers would improve the opportunities for Pacific youth. Social inclusion needs to go beyond multicultural festivals to genuine and full participation.

✓ **Social and Health Issues:** Pacific leaders should have input into initiatives to address issues such as racism and help improve access to social and health services.

✓ **Immigration:** A more open immigration scheme for Pacific people, both temporary and permanent, would encourage more migration to the region and help boost the regional economy. This would also address the issue of 'overstayers' and other irregular migrants.

Research project scope

Pilot research was conducted by Helen Lee and Makiko Nishitani in Mildura and Robinvale between August and November 2014 and involved semi-structured interviews with community leaders and key stakeholders within the horticultural sector and in health and community services. The pilot research focused on Tongan migrants, but fieldwork revealed the importance of broadening the scope to all Pacific Islanders in the region in order to understand their different experiences and the relationships between the various Islander populations. The pilot project also indicated there is a significant communication gap between these communities and public service providers, showing the need for our research to involve collaboration with local agencies.

The research team partnered with Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council (SMECC) and Mallee Sports Assembly and obtained funding through an Australian Research Council Linkage Project (ARC LP) grant for a larger project focusing on Pacific Islanders in Sunraysia. The project began in August 2015 and concluded in June 2019. The researchers are continuing to conduct related research in the region through a project funded by La Trobe University's Research Focus Area – Transforming Human Societies (2018-2019) on "Labour mobilities and Pacific Islanders' changing family relationships".

The local context in Sunraysia

According to the 2016 census, Mildura has a population of 32,738 and Robinvale 3,088. However, it is widely known in the community that census data do not reflect the reality, as many people do not complete the census form. This includes many resident Pacific people, irregular migrants from a range of countries including some from the Pacific, and mobile seasonal workers living and working in the region during the harvest season.

Sunraysia has a long history of multiculturalism. Southern Europeans moved into the area in the nineteenth century and during and after the two world wars. People of many other nationalities have migrated to the region, including recent refugee resettlement. Pacific people have moved to the region since the 1980s; initially this was primarily Tongans attracted by the job opportunities available on farms. Some of them did not have work permits and came to the area due to the relative lack of surveillance in regional communities. Over time, some were caught and deported, and others were able to get permanent residency or Australian citizenship and continue to live in the area. Other Pacific people have moved to the region since the 1990s and the number of these migrants has constantly increased. Since 2001, when NZ citizenship holders' entitlements to welfare were changed, many Cook Islanders have moved to the area to find work, when they could not find jobs in cities and welfare support was no longer available to them. Since the coups d'état in the 2000s in Fiji, many Fijians have also migrated to Sunraysia. Some Solomon Islanders and Ni-Vanuatu have also moved to Sunraysia aiming to settle permanently.

In recent years there has also been an influx of temporary workers from the Pacific through the Seasonal Worker Programme and, since July 2018, the Pacific Labour Scheme. Pacific communities provide significant in-kind support to these workers (such as food, blankets and clothing), as well as sending remittances to support family members in their island homelands and contributing to visiting Pacific fundraising groups. These financial obligations mean that for the most part, Pacific people are socio-economically disadvantaged, increasing their marginalisation within the wider community. However, they are also culturally valued for family and community cohesion.

Despite the numerous challenges they face, Pacific people make a significant contribution to the economy of the region through their hard work and horticultural skills. Many have significant and valuable roles in their own communities and the wider society.

Research Methodology

This research was approved by the La Trobe University Human Ethics Committee (HEC15-107) and by the Victorian Department of Education and Training. Methods included semi-structured interviews of between 30 minutes and 2 hours; household surveys to collect demographic and other data; focus groups and workshops; and participant observation at community events. See Appendix for key data from the household surveys.

Local Pacific researchers were employed to assist data collection and the contributions of Ms Jasmine Kirirua, Mrs Sereima Waqalevu and Mrs 'Atelaite Foliaki were invaluable for the project. In order to ensure ethical collaborative research, Pacific community leaders were invited to form a Pacific Advisory Group. We held workshops each year to share our research findings with community leaders through this group and seek their guidance and input. Our two Partner Organisations also had ongoing input into the research.

Interviews and surveys:

- Pacific Islanders (mostly Tongans, Fijians, Cook Islanders, Solomon Islanders and Ni-Vanuatu)
 - 104 households, covering 300 household members (includes 4 non-Pacific spouses)
 - 93 semi-structured interview participants
- Stakeholders
 - 13 representatives from health services, the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services, the education sector, community organisations, service providers

Focus groups and workshops:

(Numbers are total individuals, some of whom participated more than once)

- Pacific Islanders
 - 8 focus group sessions with high school students (16-18 years old): 13 students
 - 5 focus group sessions with young adults (18 years old-37 years old): 18 people
 - 3 workshops with members of the Pacific Islander Advisory Group: 14 people
- Stakeholders
 - 2 focus group sessions with high school principals and teachers: 18 people

Partner Organisations

Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council

Sunraysia Mallee Ethnic Communities Council Inc. (SMECC) is a non-profit organisation. Since 1979 SMECC has been Sunraysia's leading service for migrant and emerging communities and has helped settle new migrants and refugees into the area. The Executive Officer of SMECC, Mr Dean Wickham, was the Partner Investigator on the ARC LP. He was involved in creating interview questions, conducting interviews and administering survey questionnaires, and he helped the research team liaise with other key stakeholders. As a Solomon Islander, he has connections with local Melanesian communities.

Mallee Sports Assembly

Mallee Sports Assembly Inc. is a non-profit organisation, which aims to develop, promote and service Sport and Recreation opportunities in the Mallee region. The Assembly currently receives funding from Sport and Recreation Victoria, VicHealth, the Department of Human Services and a number of other agencies to conduct a range of programs. We thank Ms Carmel Mackay, Executive Officer of MSA, for her support of the project.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Employment

Since the first arrivals in the 1980s most Pacific people have been employed in farm work, usually on a seasonal basis. Within Pacific cultural groups working inside is more highly regarded than working outside, therefore farm work tends to be regarded negatively. However, due to their lack of knowledge about the career opportunities in horticultural industries beyond casual labour, and structural barriers to other forms of employment, the majority of settled Pacific migrants still engage with farm work on casual, seasonal basis. Only a minority have secured more stable and skilled farm work, such as farm manager roles, or employment beyond the horticultural sector.

There are some gender differences in employment patterns. Women are more likely than men to seek jobs other than farm work. Some women who have permanent residency and English skills go to TAFE and find employment in roles in the service sector, such as aged care workers and community liaison workers in community and health services.

Pacific people undertaking casual farm work typically experience:

- Unstable income, often without superannuation and other benefits
- Irregular migrants are particularly vulnerable to exploitation by employers and contractors
- Physically demanding work: long hours, hot weather, physically exhausting and often physically damaging tasks (e.g. exposure to chemicals sprayed on crops)
- Racism and discrimination from employers and other workers
- Threat of job loss with the expansion of the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), which brings temporary Pacific horticultural workers to the region, and the Pacific Labour Scheme (PLS) which since July 2018 has brought Pacific workers to regional Australia for up to three years for non-seasonal farm work as well as employment in aged care and hospitality

Whether or not they work on farms, even long-term Pacific residents and second-generation youth tend to lack knowledge of their work rights and entitlements, and they are unlikely to know who to contact if they have problem with their employers.

Recommendations:

- Information about their work rights should be provided to Pacific people through their community leaders, with opportunities to ask questions and seek support
- Information about possible career paths within the horticultural sector should also be made available
- Supports should be in place to encourage Pacific people to access adult education in order to seek career paths beyond the horticultural sector
- See below for recommendations for education in relation to employment

2. Education

There has been improvement in educational outcomes for Pacific youth in recent years, however many still leave school early and few attend university. TAFE is understood as for those who are 'unsuccessful'. Many people do not know the options offered at TAFE and associated career paths. There is a disconnection between schools and many of the parents of Pacific students, which contributes to a lack of support for young people's education.

- Youth report that teachers have low expectations of them and provide little support

- Students feel they tend to be regarded as ‘trouble-makers’. They report that teachers are more likely to pay attention to them when problems arise than when they do something good or behave well
- There is evidence of a gap between teachers’ understanding and that of students, in that students believe racism exists at school while teachers believe they are embracing diversity
- Many Pacific parents are concerned about their children’s education and future careers; however they tend to believe schools are the place where children engage with learning. On the other hand, the Australian education system places importance on support from parents and learning environment at home. Thus, teachers tend to perceive Pacific parents as unsupportive of their children’s education and associate the lack of support with truancy and literacy issues
- There tends to be a lack of additional support for Pacific students within schools, with funding directed toward students from Aboriginal and refugee families
- Despite an increase in completions of Year 12, Pacific youth are still unlikely to attend university
- As of 1 January 2016, some NZ Special Category Visa (SCV) holders are eligible to apply for HECS-HELP to enter university. We found that this information is not known among Pacific young people.
- Pacific youth who do attend university experience significant challenges to completing their studies, especially those who move to a city to attend university, who often have difficulty adjusting to the new location and to university life
- Those who return to Sunraysia after leaving to seek education or employment often resort to casual, seasonal farm work

Recommendations:

- Earlier intervention at the primary school level to support Pacific children’s learning especially their literacy and numeracy skills
- Pacific liaison staff for schools to help involve parents in their children’s education
- Involve the liaison staff and community leaders in planning for initiatives to support Pacific students in primary and high school
- Information sessions for Pacific students about options for apprenticeships, TAFE, university and other pathways to employment
- Given that many Pacific people are SCV holders, information about their eligibility for HICS-HELP needs to be widely shared
- Transition to university activities targeting Pacific students
- Events and resources regarding diverse career paths, including the use of Pacific role models
- Schools should advocate for Pacific students with tertiary institutions and employer groups

3. Youth

Many Pacific young people have been born and raised in Sunraysia and are Australian citizens. Many want to stay in the area after they finish school but struggle to find employment. None of the Pacific young people who participated in our project said they want to work on a farm.

However:

- Many of them experience racism, discrimination and marginalisation, and encounter social stigmatisation of Pacific people as ‘fruit pickers’ and stereotypes of young males, in particular, as dangerous and threatening

- Young Pacific people regard farm work as physically exhausting, unstable, and poorly paid. They are not well informed about possible career paths in the horticultural industry that can be obtained through apprenticeships or TAFE certificates
- Teachers reported that Pacific youth are likely to be overlooked for apprenticeships
- Young people are also unlikely to go to university or TAFE (see above)

Young Pacific people regard family relationships as highly important, however, cultural expectations within their families can bring some challenges:

- Strongly hierarchical relationships with their parents make it difficult for youth to talk about their problems and aspirations
- Youth have a responsibility to help support family members which often involves financial and time commitment
- Youth earning any income are expected to make financial contributions to their immediate family and other relatives, church and community fundraising events
- Seeking support outside the family is not encouraged
- Youth tend not to be encouraged to be ambitious due to cultural norms about their place in the social hierarchy
- Fear of shame prevents them from speaking out and asking for support

Recommendations:

- A Pacific peak body is needed to work with community services to address racism and discrimination and the stigmatisation of Pacific people in the region
- The peak body could also function to give Pacific youth a voice in issues affecting them, and provide them with information about support services
- Pacific liaison staff for schools could work with families to address problems experienced by youth
- Introduce incentives to employers to take on Pacific youth as apprentices and workers

4. Social and Health Issues

Pacific people report feeling 'invisible' to others in the region – apart from the stereotypes applied to them which are often negative. They tend to seek support within their own families and communities, particularly through their churches, for any social problems they experience, and many are reluctant to seek help for health problems until they are seriously ill.

- Both parents and young people feel they are invisible because they believe social supports are primarily aimed at Aboriginal people and recently arrived refugees
- Pacific people also feel invisible due to the lack of recognition of their contribution to the region's economy over many years
- In contrast, their visibility is primarily through stereotypes of Islanders, including their stigmatisation as 'fruit pickers'
- Because seeking support outside the family is not encouraged, specialist support necessary for problems such as mental illness tends not to be sought
- When help is sought beyond the family it is usually within the ethnic community, e.g. through the churches. Church ministers can act as gatekeepers
- Irregular migrants are the most unlikely to access health care, but our household survey revealed that that they see health issues as a serious concern
- Tensions between and within Pacific communities can make it difficult to present a united front to request services and support

- Community leaders are often under pressure due to high level of demands on their time, yet they are unlikely to seek outside support for their community members
- There are significant financial demands on community members through their churches and for remittances to their homelands, including fundraising groups from the Pacific Islands who frequently visit the region
- Common health issues include NCDs especially diabetes, heart problems, strokes; these are often related to obesity and poor diet, partly due to low, unstable income from seasonal work.
- People also raised concerns about chemical exposure at the farms. While it is beyond the scope of this research, it is important to note that some Pacific people associated this with asthma and skin problems including eczema.
- Gambling was raised as a significant issue by many survey participants, who often ranked this as a greater problem than youth issues
- Stakeholders such as community service organisations saw overcrowded housing as a key issue facing Pacific populations and identified domestic violence and child abuse as significant problems. However, Pacific research participants did not raise these as significant issues, highlighting cultural differences in understanding of social problems
- Sports were valued in many ways, including as an opportunity for social interactions and for potential future career paths (e.g. as a professional rugby player). However, while some participants said sport provides opportunities to nurture cross-cultural friendships, others described the sports field as a place where racial abuse commonly occurs

Recommendations:

- Workshops for key community stakeholders with input from Pacific leaders, to discuss issues such as racism and discrimination and lead initiatives to address these issues
- Establish a peak body for Pacific people in the region, supported by organisations such as SMECC, to give them a greater voice in the community
- Information sessions for Pacific Islanders e.g. a Pacific expo with information from community and health services, sporting and other recreational activities, etc.
- Organisations such as Mallee Sports Assembly to work with Pacific communities to encourage participation in sports and to address ongoing racism in sporting contexts

5. Immigration Issues

Pacific people living in Sunraysia have a range of immigration statuses, from Australian citizenship to temporary visas, and in some cases are irregular migrants attempting to obtain visas allowing them to remain in Australia. Some have New Zealand citizenship, with restricted rights to welfare benefits.

- The path to permanent resident status and citizenship can be long and expensive, with inconsistent outcomes. It is becoming increasingly difficult for Pacific people to amend their legal statuses
- Some New Zealand citizens do not know their rights. For example, NZ Special Category Visa (SCV) holders are not eligible for many benefits from Centrelink but they are eligible for Medicare. However, our research revealed some cases in which NZ citizens paid all of their medical bills, believing they were not eligible for Medicare
- A stricter immigration pathway for SCV Holders prevents those who have seasonal work from applying for Australian citizenship. For example, they must meet the income Threshold of \$53,900 per year for four income years before lodging an application, which they are unlikely to earn through precarious farm work

- An increase in the cost of partner visas in recent years has put them out of reach for low income couples
- The Seasonal Worker Programme has led to some workers absconding which leads to ruptures of family relationships in their homelands and increases surveillance of settled Pacific communities who are thought to be harbouring these absconders

Recommendations:

A more open immigration scheme for Pacific people, both temporary and permanent, would encourage more migration to the region and help boost the regional economy. This would also address the issue of 'overstayers', 'absconders' and other irregular migrants.

Publications – for further information

- Nishitani, M and H. Lee (2019) 'Becoming "overstayers": The coloniality of citizenship and the resilience of Pacific farmworkers'. In V. Stead and J. Altman, eds. *Labour lines and colonial power: Indigenous and Pacific Islander experiences of labour mobility in Australia*. Canberra: ANU Press. <http://press-files.anu.edu.au/downloads/press/n5654/pdf/ch07.pdf>
- Nishitani, M, H Lee and D Wickham (2019) 'The forgotten people in Australia's regional settlement policy are Pacific Islander residents', *The Conversation* 28 May 2019. <https://theconversation.com/the-forgotten-people-in-australias-regional-settlement-policy-are-pacific-islander-residents-116277>
- Lee, H and M. Nishitani (2018) Who are Pacific farmworkers in Australia? *Devpolicy Blog*, Development Policy Centre, ANU. <http://www.devpolicy.org/pacific-farmworkers-in-australia-20180206/>
- Nishitani, M and H. Lee (2017) 'Invisible Islanders? Precarious work and Pacific Islander settlers in rural Australia' *Pacific Studies*, 40: 3, pp.430-449.

Engagement and Impact

- Met with the CEO of the Scanlon Foundation, Anthea Hancocks to discuss the research findings; the foundation has now funded a Pacific Island Network – Victoria, to be based in Mildura and led by the project's Partner Investigator, Dean Wickham.
- Held a public forum: 'Islanders in the sun: Pacific Islanders in Regional Victoria' in Mildura, May 2019, attending by a range of community and government stakeholders.
- Attended the UN consultation to Human Rights and Business as one of panellists at the Australian Human Rights Commission (November 2018).
- Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's public hearing Inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia in Mildura (Oct 2017).
- Reported research findings on the ARC LP project to Mr Andrew Ford, Australian High Commissioner to Tonga at a meeting at SMECC in Mildura (March 2017).

APPENDIX: Pacific Islanders in Regional Victoria: household survey data

A household survey was completed by 104 households in Mildura and Robinvale during the project, collecting data for a total of 300 people. Most of the residents in these households were Tongan, Fijian, Cook Islander, Ni-Vanuatu, and Solomon Islander. There were only 8 intercultural households, in which there were partners of household members who included an Aboriginal woman, Hungarian man, Samoan man, Maori man, Tahitian woman, and an Anglo-Australian man and woman. There was also one PNG male who shared a house with a research participant. Therefore 4 household members were not of Pacific ancestry. The person who completed the survey on behalf of their household is referred to below as the **survey respondent** and in some cases, questions were only directed at that respondent (58.6% of survey respondents were women and 39.4 % were men).

Age and gender

The surveys revealed a young population, with 59.7% of residents under 34 years old and 32.7% under 18. However, 44 Fijians aged 50 and over participated in this survey; without them the percentage under 18 is even higher (38.3%).

There were 202 adults (over 18) in the households surveyed; the oldest woman was a 78-year-old who still worked on farm, and the oldest man was a 75-year-old pensioner. The oldest working man was a 69-year-old farmworker.

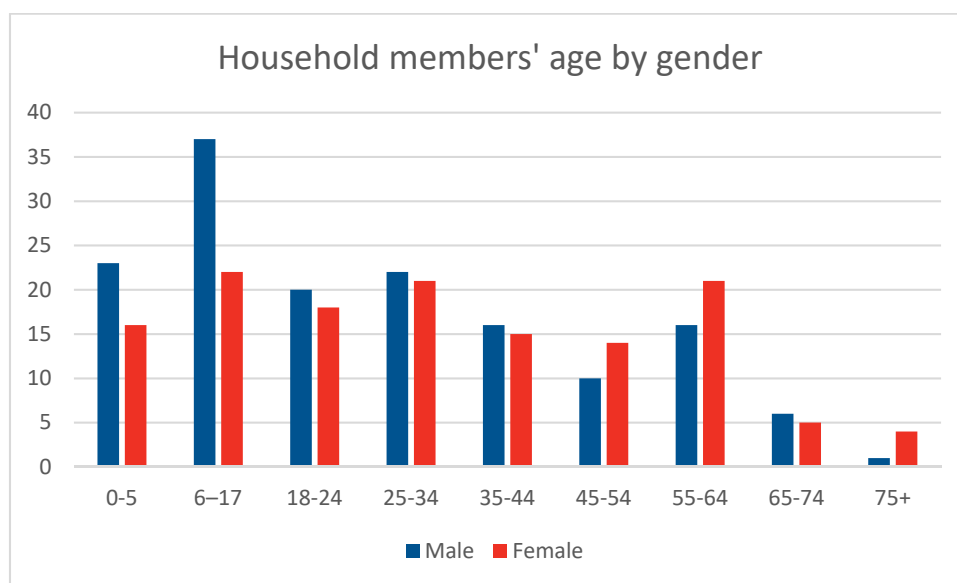


Table 1: household members by age and gender

Issues of concern to Pacific people

The significance of immigration and visa issues are highlighted in Table 2. Survey respondents were asked to select 'problems that affect your community' and could choose more than one option. More than 70% selected 'immigration/visa' although it is important to note that none of the Cook Islanders selected this because they have New Zealand citizenship. Other Pacific groups identified immigration and visa issues as the most significant issue (66.7% of Tongans and 87.72% of Fijians, Solomon Islanders and Ni-Vanuatu combined). Other issues varied but as Table 2 shows, health, income, gambling, unemployment and education were all seen as important.

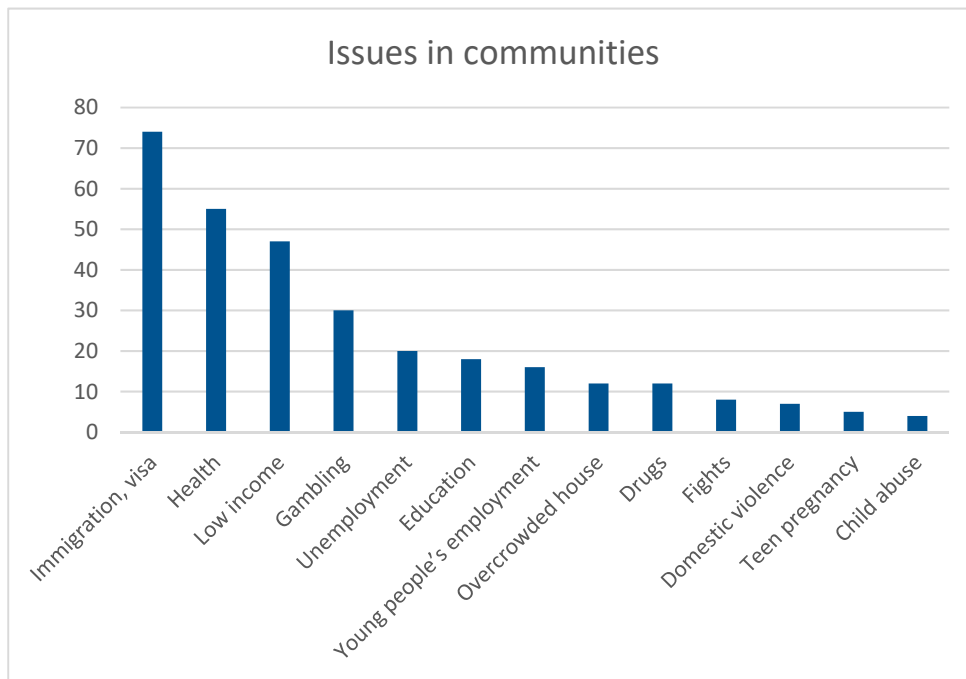


Table 2: Problems identified in Pacific communities, showing the number of responses.

It is important to note that the proportion of irregular migrants who participated in this survey does not reflect actual proportion within the Pacific population (Table 3) as our research sought out these migrants as participants. Irregular migrants include some who had overstayed their visas as well as a small number of people who had a current visitor visa and intended to return home and not overstay their visa but were working on a farm without working rights.

Immigration status	No.	%
Australian citizens and holders of permanent residence visas	39	37.5
NZ Special Category Visa	4	3.9
Seasonal Worker Programme	4	3.9
Temporary partner visa	3	2.9
Bridging visa	1	0.9
Protection visa	1	0.9
Irregular migrants	49	47.1
No answer, unknown	3	2.9
TOTAL	104	100

Table 3: Immigration status of 104 survey respondents

Household income & size

The survey results for household income are striking, with almost 40% of households reporting income under \$20,000; another 36.5% respondents did not know their household income (4.8% left it blank). It is possible that when multiple household members (e.g. parents and adult children) were engaged with waged work, survey respondents did not know how much each of them earn, thus chose the option 'don't know'. However, 8 respondents live alone, 3 live as

couples, and 9 live with their partner and underage children. Thus, there might be other factors that led them to choose 'don't know'. One could be that the seasonal nature of the work for many household members made it difficult for survey respondents to state the household income. Among those who did not know, 17 were irregular migrants, many of whom live on the farm where they work.

The 'poverty line' was defined in Australia for 2018 for a single person as \$22,516; 2 people \$33,753; sole parent and 2 children \$36,003; couple and 2 children \$47,254. These are 50% of the median income of 2015-2016).¹ In the survey of Pacific households, 34 (32.7%) are around the poverty line or below. In an Australia wide study of poverty in 2015-2016, 13.2% in Australia lived below the poverty line (Davidson et al. 2018, 16). The poverty rate of the survey respondents therefore is alarmingly higher than the general Australian population. It is important to note here that despite their low incomes, 88 (84.6%) of the survey respondents reported that they regularly send remittances to their family in the islands or elsewhere in the diaspora.

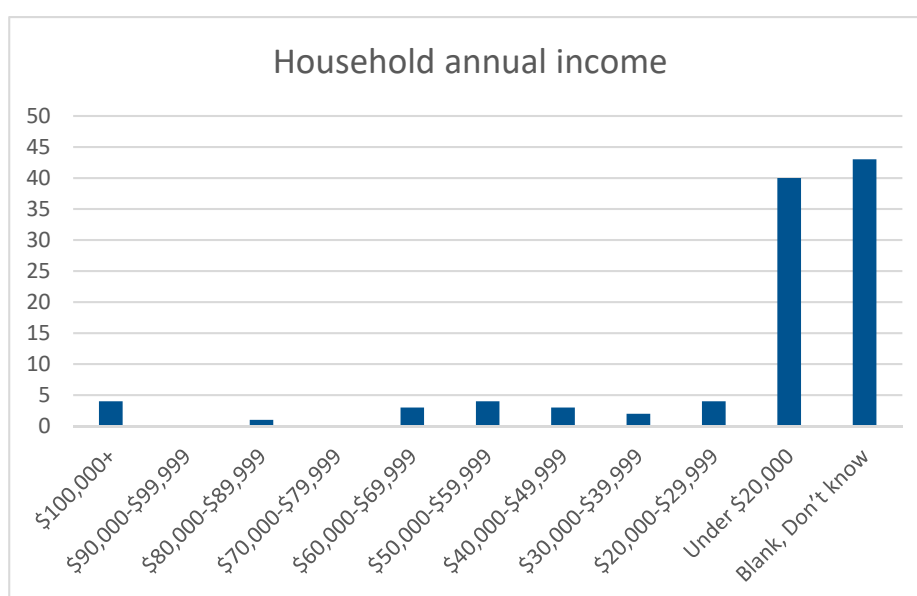


Table 4: household annual income by number of respondents

Only 10 (9.6%) of 104 households own their own home and all home owners are Tongans with permanent resident status or Australian citizenship. Others rent privately (26.7%), live in state housing (11.5%), or live on the farm on which they are working (25%) which is in a few cases a family house with rent from \$120-240 per week but for most is a room with a shared kitchen with rent from \$40-90 per week. Although service providers in the region sometimes assume Pacific people experience overcrowded housing, our survey indicates that this is not a significant issue, with only 6 (7.3%) of the 104 households meeting the definition of overcrowding as sharing a bedroom with more than 2 people. In contrast, we found that 28% of households had the same number of rooms as household members. Table 5 shows the number of people living in the households surveyed, excluding 22 households (all single people or couples) who rented a room on the farm where they worked.

¹ Davidson, P., Saunders, P., Bradbury, B. and Wong, M. (2018), Poverty in Australia, 2018. ACOSS/UNSW Poverty and Inequality Partnership Report No. 2, Sydney: ACOSS.

Household size	No.	%
Single	12	14.6
Couple	4	4.9
3 people	8	9.8
4 people	10	12.2
5 people	13	15.9
6 people	10	12.2
7 people	3	3.7
9 people	2	2.4
10 people	2	2.4
No answer	18	21.9
TOTAL	82	100

Table 5: Number of residents in the surveyed households

Education

Of the 104 Pacific survey respondents, 36.53% did not complete Year 12.

Education level	No.	%
Postgraduate	1	1
Degree	9	8.7
Diploma	10	9.6
Trade Certificate	15	14.4
Year 12	20	19.2
Year 11	8	7.7
Year 10	15	14.4
Year 9 or below	15	14.4
Don't know/no answer	11	10.6
TOTAL	104	100

Table 6: Education level of Pacific survey respondents

Occupation

Out of 296 Pacific people whose details were collected via the household survey, there are 39 children before school age and 69 students. Table 7 shows the occupation of Pacific household members who were neither children nor students; 188 people in total. A total of 57.9% of these adults were doing farm work, with only slightly more males than females. The next highest category was domestic duties (9.6%) and the other categories were each under 8% of respondents.

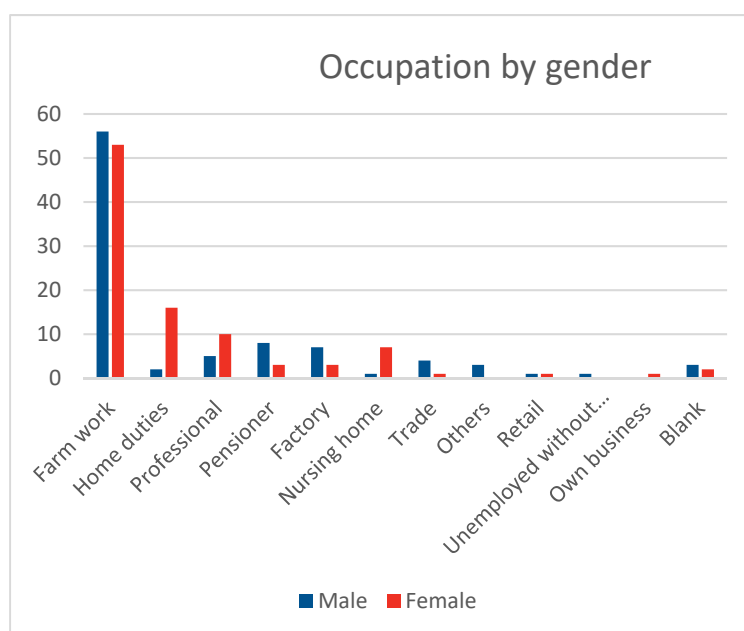


Table 7: Occupation of adult Pacific household members

Of the Pacific people who engage with farm work it is notable that 60.5% were aged 40 and over. There were 21 people (19.3%) aged 60 and over still working on farms. Due to low, unstable income, many interviewees talked about financial difficulties which make it hard to retire. Also, irregular migrants do not have any safety net, so they have to continue to work to make a living, and those who are working while on tourist visas are often older workers. Overall there are similar numbers of males and females doing farm work (28.2% female and 29.8% male), although there are differences in the gender ratio for different age groups, as shown in Table 8.

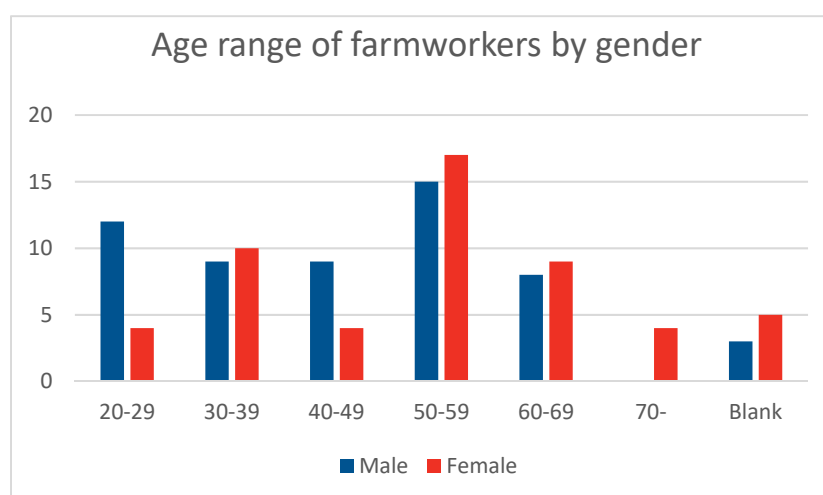


Table 8: Age range of farm workers by gender, showing the number of workers in each age group (total = 109)

Religion

All survey respondents identified themselves as Christian, with 52 attending ethnic churches and 42 attending churches that provide services only in English. As Table 9 shows, 75.9% go to church at least once a week and more than 40% go more than twice a week; this would be for church services as well as other activities such as bible study and choir practice.

Church attendance	No.	%
More than twice a week	43	41.4
Twice a week	16	15.4
Once a week	20	19.2
Once a fortnight	5	4.8
Once a month	5	4.8
Blank	15	14.4
TOTAL	104	100

Table 9: Frequency of church attendance for survey respondents

★ Key differences between Pacific households surveyed

Fijian households: 52 households, 86 people. 20 households (38.46%) just use Fijian language and 27 households (51.92%) are bilingual (Fijian and English). None of the households had mixed marriages.

Tongan households: 36 households, 145 people. Five households (13.89%) just use Tongan language and the other households are bilingual (Tongan and English). Two intermarried spouses (an Aboriginal woman and a Hungarian man) are included.

Cook Islander households: 11 households, 55 people. All households are bilingual. Intercultural partners include a Tahitian female, Samoan male, Maori male, and Australian male and female.

Solomon Islanders households: 4 households, 10 people. All households are bilingual (Pidgin and English). One includes a PNG man who shares a house.

Ni-Vanuatu household: one household, four people. Bilingual (Pidgin and English).

The Cook Islander and Tongan households have a young age profile, with 63.64% of Cook Islander household members and 54.48% of Tongan household members aged 0-24 years. In contrast, only 20.93% of Fijian household members and 21.43% of Solomon Islanders and Ni-Vanuatu are aged 0-24. Fijian households are characterised by old age and 48.84% household members are aged 45 and older. Only 12.73% of Cook Islander household members and 18.62% Tongans are aged 45 or over. The majority of Ni-Vanuatu and Solomon Islanders are aged between 25 and 44 years old.

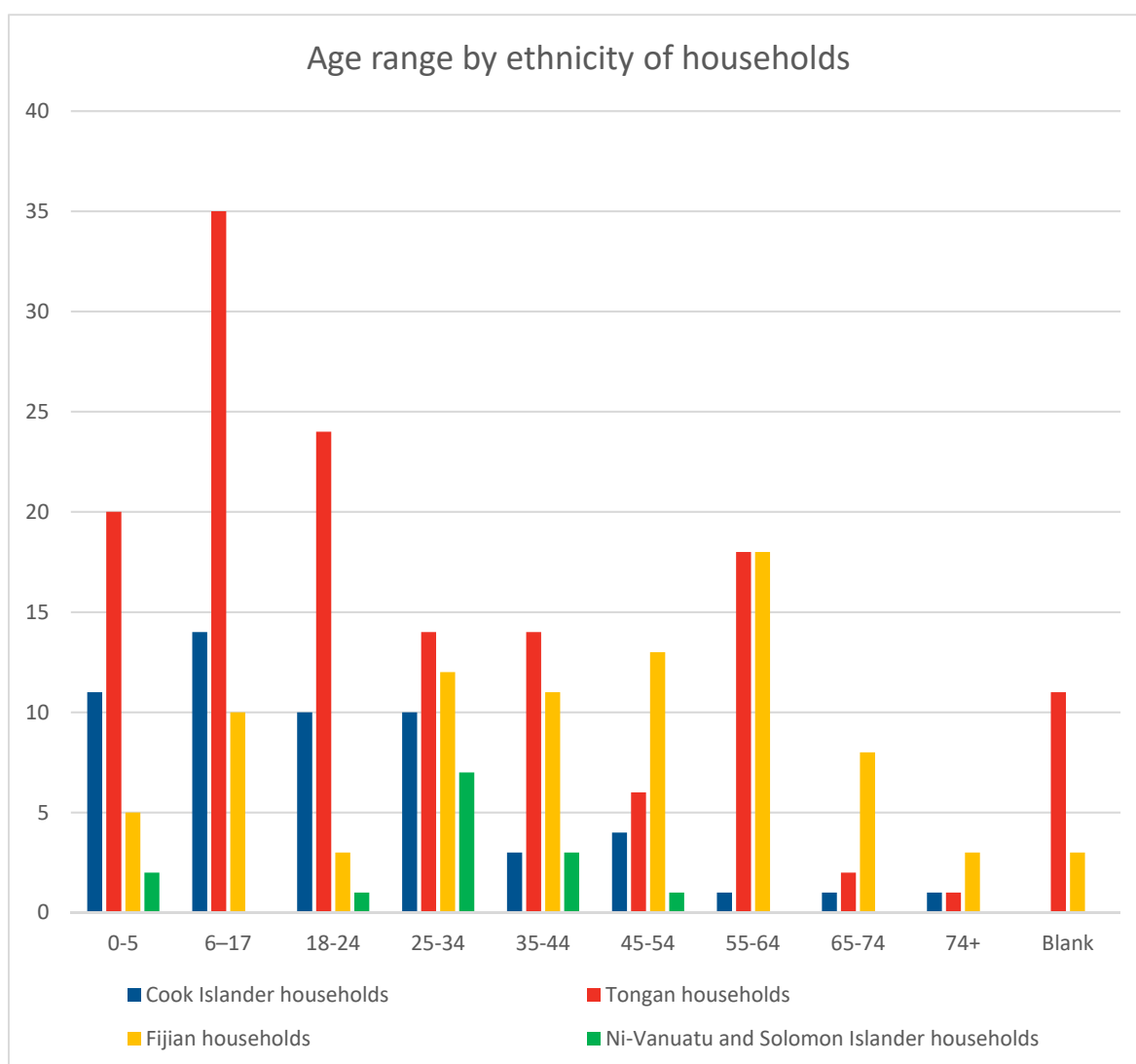


Table 10: Age range of household members by ethnicity