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Pacific Communities in Australia

Abstract

This report strives to provide a greater understanding and awareness of Pacific communities in Australia. Through the compilation of data gained from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, this document is the first of its kind on reviewing the human geography of Pacific people across various life domains in an Australian context.

Keywords

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PACIFIC COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA



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Overview

This report strives to provide a greater understanding and awareness of Pacific communities in Australia. Through the compilation of data gained from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, this document is the first of its kind on reviewing the human geography of Pacific people across various life domains in an Australian context.

(a) Pacific people in Australia

Pacific people have a long association with Australia as part of its identification within the Oceania region. With the majority migrating through the evolving multicultural policies of the 1960's, Australia's Pacific population are now recognised as a group of 23 Pacific ancestries (Figure 1) from across the Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian grouping of South Pacific Island states and territories (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2011). This also includes the Indigenous people of New Zealand – Maori.

Figure 1: Pacific population in Australia by ancestry

Ancestry	Total
Oceanian, nfd*	12,541
Maori	128,430
Melanesian and Papuan, nfd	643
New Caledonian	204
Ni-Vanuatu	705
Papua New Guinean	15,460
Solomon Islander	1,405
Melanesian and Papuan, nec#	530
Micronesian, nfd	99
I-Kiribati	677
Nauruan	409
Micronesian, nec	138
Polynesian, nfd	2164
Cook Islander	16,193
Fijian	23,770
Niuean	3143
Samoan	55,843
Tongan	25,096
Hawaiian	333
Tahitian	722
Tokelauan	1,655
Tuvaluan	430
Polynesian, nec	443
Total	279,248

*nfd: Not Further Defined #nec: Not Elsewhere Classified

The majority of Pacific communities reside along the east coast of Australia (Figure 2), with largest cohort living in Queensland, followed by New South Wales and Victoria.

Figure 2: Pacific people across Australian states & territories

State/Territory	Pacific Population	% of State/Territory Population
New South Wales	92,028	1.3%
Victoria	43,055	0.8%
Queensland	102,320	2.4%
South Australia	5,246	0.3%
Western Australia	28,954	1.3%
Tasmania	1,821	0.4%
Northern Territory	2,827	1.3%
Australian Capital Territory	2,977	0.8%
TOTAL	279,228	1.3%*

* of Australia's total population of 21,507,719

Based on the 5 largest Pacific cohorts in Australia, the largest Samoan, Tongan and Fijian community reside in New South Wales; with the largest group of Maori and Cook Islanders residing in Queensland (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Top 5 Pacific cohorts across Australian states & territories

	Maori		Samoan		Tongan		Fijian		Cook Islanders	
NSW	32,193	25.1%	21,680	38.8%	14,376	57.3%	12,533	52.7%	5,100	31.5%
VIC	18,367	14.3%	10,670	19.1%	3,921	15.6%	3605	15.2%	3,835	23.7%
QLD	48,283	37.6%	20,542	36.8%	5,065	20.2%	5467	23.0%	5,652	34.9%
SA	3,239	2.5%	335	0.6%	233	0.9%	554	2.3%	198	1.2%
WA	23,063	18.0%	1,729	3.1%	663	2.6%	849	3.6%	1,198	7.4%
TAS	1,075	0.8%	156	0.3%	118	0.5%	169	0.7%	50	0.3%
NT	1,289	1.0%	169	0.3%	163	0.6%	277	1.2%	89	0.5%
ACT	917	0.7%	562	1.0%	559	2.2%	316	1.3%	71	0.4%
TOTAL	128,426	100%	55,843	100%	25,098	100%	23,770	100%	16,193	100%

Based on the statistics of Pacific people living in capital cities along the east coast of Australia, 72,223 live in Sydney, 62,540 live in Greater Brisbane, and 34,568 live in Melbourne.

(b) Previous research on Pacific communities in Australia

There is limited research on Pacific communities within an Australia context. Most of the research undertaken has been on the over representation of Pacific people in anti social behaviour and crime (Ravulo 2015) and their involvement in seasonal working schemes within rural settings (Maclellan & Mares 2006). Conversely, they are noted for the achievements within Sports, including Rugby League & Rugby Union (Horton 2014).

i) Social risk and protective factors

With specific attention on their involvement in youth offending, previous research (Ravulo 2009) on Pacific families involved in justice settings has provided an insight into the development of social risk and protective factors. Such factors were evident across three domains: individual and family, peer & community, and education, employment & training. The scope to create these framework has further supported the development of psychosocial resources, included case management models, tools and other individual, group and family work tools.



Overview – continued

Figure 4: Pacific Youth Social Risk & Protective Factors

PACIFIC YOUTH SOCIAL RISK FACTORS		
INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY	PEER & COMMUNITY	EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communal negative alcohol usage from parents • Excessive violent (physical and verbal) behaviour within family home and community • Lack of verbal reasoning • Lack of access to privately owned, registered vehicles • Lack of knowledge about accessing Social Security benefits • Overcrowding in family homes • Parental low level of secondary education • Lack of access to Proof of Identification • Older sibling involved in crime • High-level care given by older siblings to younger siblings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative involvement with police • Excessive/binge usage of alcohol and marijuana • Misinterpretation of presenting behaviours by professional legal settings • Lack of rapport with non-Pacific adults in community setting • High level of infringement notices and fines • First offence being of a serious indictable nature • Negative peer group association through organised gangs • Lack of consistent attendance at court due to no parental support • Conflicting ideologies developed between Western & Pacific culture • Legal conditions that contradict family relations • Active enrolment in school during court proceedings • Inconsistent approach and access to physical and mental health care services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of educational resources • Parents undertaking more than one full-time job to maintain financial stability • Early school leaving (pre-Year 10) • Misinterpretation of presenting behaviours by professionals in education • Lack of training and advancement for parents predominantly employed in low-skilled labour force
PACIFIC YOUTH SOCIAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS		
INDIVIDUAL & FAMILY	PEER & COMMUNITY	EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural inclusiveness within family home • Enhanced understanding of Western systems (education, health, legal, community) for both young person and parents • Development of verbal communication skills • Positive attitudes towards life long learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active involvement in sporting commitments • Genuine involvement in spiritual and faith-based activities • Enhanced relationship with police who appreciate Pacific culture • Enhanced relationship with teachers who appreciate Pacific culture • Participation in cultural activities across community • Strong sense of community participation reinforced by Pacific relatives also living in Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive association and awareness of educational institutions for both young person & parents • Access to vocational training courses for both young person and parents • Consistent attendance at School • Access to support and training materials in assisting educational placement • Continuation of schooling beyond middle years • Focus and desire during adolescence to undertake vocational interest

ii) Cultural perspectives

Additional empirical research by Ravulo (2009) has also provided a framework to create an overview of shared Pacific cultural values and beliefs (Figure 5), further underpinned by a review of possible differences that Pacific communities may experience through their interaction with dominant Western culture evident in an Australian context (Figure 6). This particular work has formed the development of Pacific cultural awareness programs (Ravulo 2014) implemented across the National Rugby League (NRL) and the Australian Rugby Union (ARU) through the Rugby Union Players Association (RUPA) who experience a high volume of Pacific representation across both codes.

Figure 5: Shared Pacific Values, Beliefs & Ideals

What are shared Pacific values, beliefs and ideals?

From time spent ethnographically observing Pacific culture and how it manifests in behaviour across the community, a trend towards five specific topic areas that summarise cultural values, beliefs, and ideals is evident. These are: family, spirituality, food, recreation/sport, and the visual and performing arts. Predominantly, each area individually and collectively promotes the concept of community. In essence, there is a strong pattern to social cohesiveness made evident through an emphasis on people living together.

How does each value and belief impact on behaviour?

Family

- A collective of individuals conforming to an overall family identity. Self-identity based on family reputation and standing in community.
- Close ties to ancestral heritage and locations promoted by ongoing reference and contact with villages and family living across Pacific region.

Spirituality

- Includes church-based faiths (predominantly Christian). Fellowship with one another key aspect.
- Cultural characteristics: ancestral beliefs and worship practices. Traditional forms of spirituality based on village rituals, superstitions, and practices.

Food

- Culmination of an array of dishes, with mainly natural-based ingredients: seafood, beef, pork, chicken, duck, coconut, breadfruit, taro, bananas, etc.
- Celebration of resources, and an important time to bring people together in sharing company and consumables.

Recreation/Sport

- An ability to develop and exercise teamwork, and expression of competitive physical fitness and abilities.
- Close relationship with warrior heritage with an ability to represent region.
- Other people, including family, will gather to watch and support.

Visual and Performing Arts (Woodwork/Music/Dance/Storytelling)

- Expression of specific cultural and family identity; popular form for portraying and appreciating rich and diverse cultural heritage.
- Certain acts/carvings/stories will emanate from particular region or people group.
- Reiterates and personifies connection to land and sense of belonging.

Overview – continued

Figure 6: Potential Intercultural Issues with Pacific Youth

How does this potentially create intercultural issues for Pacific youth?

Education

- In Western society, knowledge is power. In Pacific culture, a strong family/community is power.
- Therefore, lack of emphasis is placed on supporting education placement through resources and in home assistance.
- Issues with teachers perpetuated by young person's lack of appreciation of goals across learning environment and school participation.

Employment and Career Aspirations

- Employment is generally sought at a younger age (from 15 years), decreasing retention rates for senior high school.
- Focus is on supporting family unit, rather than an individual desire to secure a possible career.
- Decreases positive attitudes towards life-long learning whilst perpetuating a cycle of long term low-skilled employment.

Financial

- Monies earned by young person may be pooled by parents, as this works with supporting family expenditure and the greater good.
- Remittances are sent back to relatives in the Islands, supporting their wellbeing.
- Other financial commitment may also include community fundraising, church activities, and general celebratory gifts.

Personal and Social Skills

- Negative reinforcement key characteristic to general discipline. As such, one is expected to do what is right, rather than be rewarded for positive behaviour.
- Respect for parents and elders is automatic and expected.
- When in trouble, young people are given physical hidings or verbal reprimands. During this process, young people do not actively discuss issues, or develop solutions to alter behaviour.
- Young people may not develop critical thinking and the interpersonal communication skills associated with expressing thoughts, feelings, and opinions.
- Strong regional association may lead to gang membership and subsequent anti-social activities.

Alcohol and Other Drugs

- Consumption generally revolves around social activities, previously seen in traditional usage of substances during communal gatherings.
- Pacific youth may undertake alcohol use in public places across the community, for example in parks and reserves.
- This may lead to drink walking and further anti-social behaviours.

Health

- Mental Health is perceived as spiritual issues, determined by one's relationship with others and corresponding curses. Natural remedies or traditional methods are applied, limiting access to mental health specialists across community.
- Sexual Health and practice is confined to the sanctity of marriage, and not discussed amongst families and community. This may limit awareness of risk-taking behaviours and associated health implications.

(c) Purpose of report

This report provides a bigger picture on social trends of Pacific communities living in Australia. By gaining a better understand from the statistical evidence provided by the Australian census data, policy makers, researchers, educators and community based practitioners may be able to create responses that understand the attributes of the Pacific diaspora residing in Australia; and the respective challenges and successes experienced.

It is anticipated that from this initial report, the creation of monographs detailing the specific trends of Pacific cohorts across various areas in Australia may be developed. For example, an overview of Pacific people residing in Greater Western Sydney; and how they may differ from comparative regional data.

More so, with the establishment of this study, it is foreseeable to create ongoing reports on Pacific trends in Australia through the comparison of data collated from future Census information collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Such reporting will show whether trends are changing within this cohort, and whether systemic approaches, underpinned by service models and provision, is catering for such communities.

This reports also strives to encourage the possibility to map trends across other emerging diverse community groups in Australia, and how they too may compare with the overall general Australian population trends. In turn, promoting a better scope and understanding of how diversity shapes who we are as a nation.

(d) Collection of data and analysis

The Australian Census data is a rich source of information; designed to assist an ability to effectively respond to its population; through the development of core infrastructure and systems that underpin the overall functioning of a good, and healthy society. Exploring the vast array of differences that characterise a nation is also an important part of collecting such data.

This report outlines the similarities, and differences between the Australian General population, referred in Section 2 as AUS GEN, and the Australian Pacific population, referred to as AUS PAC. As noted above, according to the Census 2011 data, Australia's overall population was 21,507,719, and the Pacific population was sitting at 279,228. Therefore, the two separate data sets are used to compare against each other, and to recognise whether certain trends occur within the Pacific community with a wider Australian context.

The data was collected via the use of TableBuilder Pro; mapped across 5 domains, and 47 classifications (Figure 7). Further information on each category can be located via the Australian Bureau of Statistic online Census Dictionary.

After accessing the data tables, percentages were drawn up based on the general Australian population, and the Pacific population, which is then presented as key findings. Trends were then subjected to a further review on whether certain cultural factors from Pacific communities impact on such findings, and/or whether societal factors may also influence certain interactions across each nominated life domain (further discussed in Section 3 – Summary).

Figure 7: ABS Census Classifications index with Domain

DOMAIN	MNEMONIC	DESCRIPTION
Demographic	AGE5P	Age in Five Year Groups
	SEXP	Sex
	CITP	Australian Citizenship
	RLHP	Relationship in Household
	AUSTRALIA	Australian Population
Education	QALFP	Non-School Qualification: Field of Study
	TYSTAP	Educational Institution: Attendee Status
	TYPP	Type of Education Institution Attending
	HSCP	Highest Year of School Completed
	QALLP	Non-School Qualification: Level of Education
	STUP	Full-Time / Part-Time Student Status
Employment	HRSP	Hours Worked
	INCP	Total Personal Income (weekly)
	INDP	Industry of Employment
	INDP 2 DIGIT (CONST)	Industry of Employment – Construction
	INDP 2 DIGIT (MANUF)	Industry of Employment – Manufacturing
	LFHRP	Labour Force Status and Hours Worked Not Stated
	MTWP	Method of Travel to Work
	EMTP	Employment Type
	DOMP	Unpaid Domestic Work: Number of Hours
	Family	CHCAREP
TISP		Number of Children Ever Born
CTPP		Child Type
MSTP		Registered Marital Status
MDCP		Social Marital Status
CACF		Count of All Children in Family
CDCF		Count of Dependant Children in Family
CPRF		Count of Persons in Family
FBLF		Family Blending
FINF		Total Family Income (weekly)
FMCF		Family Composition
HCFMF		Family Household Composition (Family)
LFSF		Labour Force Status of Parents/Partners in Families
SSCF	Same-Sex Couple Indicator	

Overview – continued

DOMAIN	MNEMONIC	DESCRIPTION
Household	BEDD	Number of Bedrooms in Private Dwelling
	HHCD	Household Composition
	LLDD	Landlord Type
	MRERD	Mortgage Repayments (monthly) Ranges
	MV1D	Household One Year Mobility Indicator
	MV5D	Household Five Year Mobility Indicator
	NEDD	Type of Internet Connection
	NPDD	Type of Non-Private Dwelling
	NPRD	Number of Persons Usually Resident in Dwelling
	RNTRD	Rent (weekly) Ranges
	SAFD	Supported Accommodation Flag
	TENLLD	Tenure and Landlord Type
	VEHD	Number of Motor Vehicles

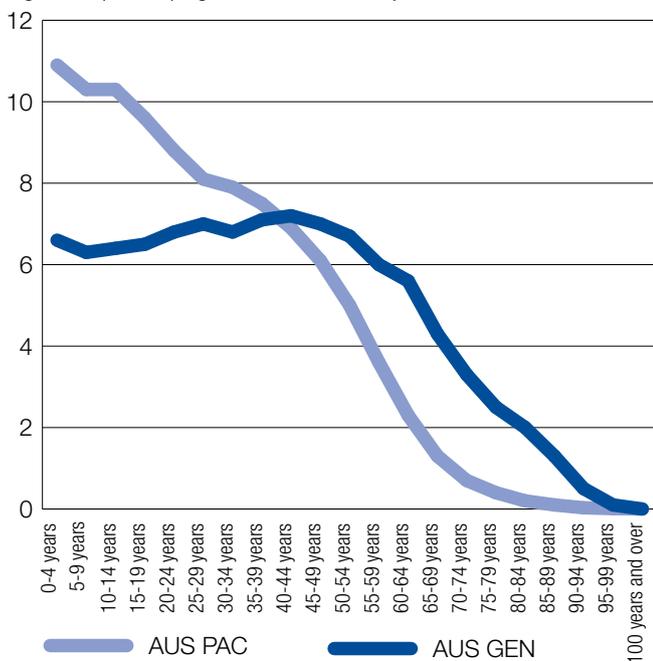


Key Findings

(a) Demographic

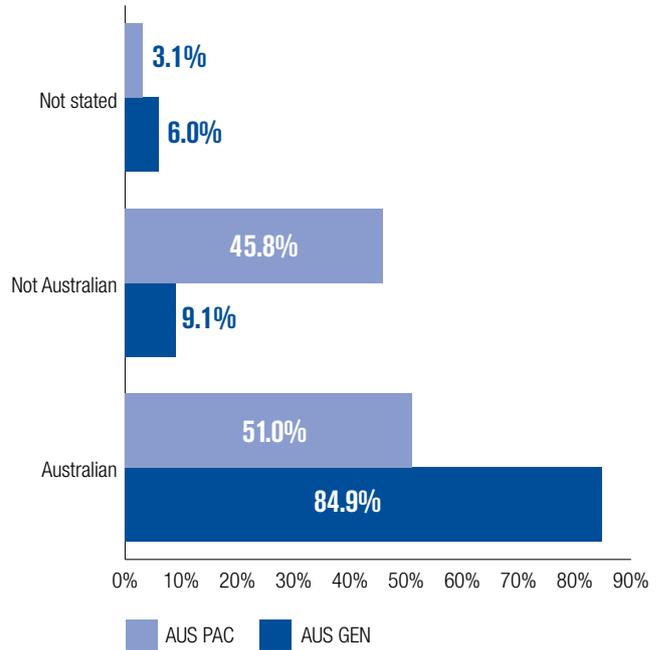
The Pacific population make up 1% of the total Australian population. The Pacific community in Australia is a rapidly growing and youthful population. The majority of the Pacific population range 0 – 24 years, whereas the majority of the general Australian population range from 25 – 49 years of age. In Figure 8, this table shows that Pacific people in Australia have a lower life expectancy in comparison to the general population and could indicate that our Pacific population are not living to an older age. This is evident in the significant decline in the 70 plus age group for Pacific people. Recent data suggests the average life expectancy in Australia is 82.1 years, but for Indigenous Australians, it is 10.6 years lower than the national average (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2014).

Figure 8: (AGE5P) Age in Five Year Groups



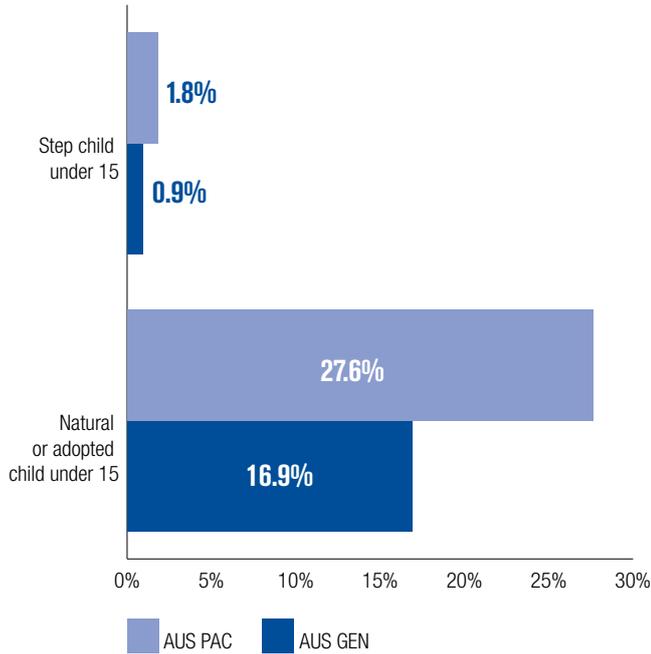
It is also important to note that 50+ age group who would have been in Australia during the 1970's and 80's are more likely to be Australian citizen or permanent residents, as it was much easier for the Pacific families in Australia to gain citizenship or permanent residency (Klapdor et al. 2009). Also, during this period a child born in Australia was automatically granted citizenship or permanent residency based on the permanent resident status of at least one parent (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2014).

Figure 9: (CITP) Australian Citizenship



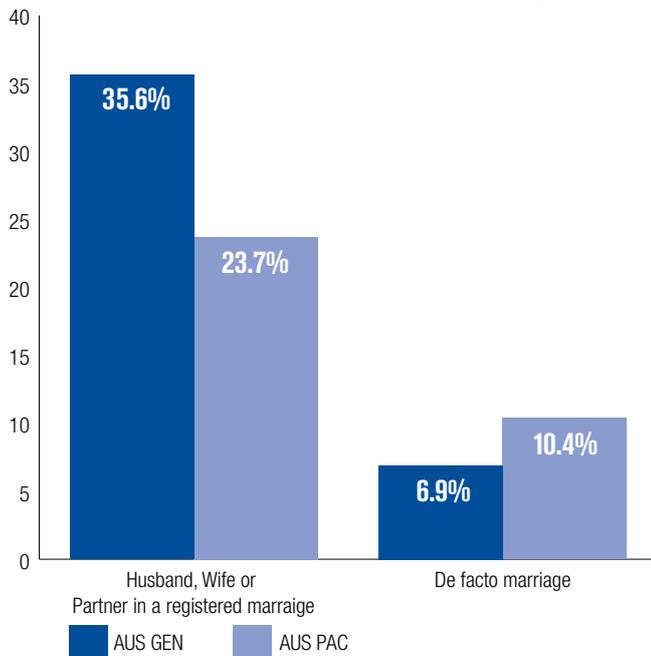
As noted in the data (Figure 9), 45.8% of Pacific people residing in Australia are not citizens; this in turn greatly impacts on access to Centrelink benefits. In 2001, a change to Centrelink's eligibility policies lead to New Zealand citizens no longer being eligible for benefits until they resided in Australia for 2 years. Approximately two years after this change was introduced, an additional requirement was implemented that made NZ citizen ineligible for benefits until they became Australian citizens. Therefore, if near to 50% of the Pacific population are not eligible for benefits, the onus is on seeking employment to support Pacific families. This may in turn lead to decreasing aspirations to pursue further education & training including access to HECS / FEE HELP. Therefore, cultural pressures to ensure that the family system is supported and stable may take precedent over one's personal desire or ambition. This is further exacerbated by societal pressures within Australia; such as the cost of living i.e. housing affordability, transport cost, etc.

Figure 10: (RLHP) Relationship in Household – Children



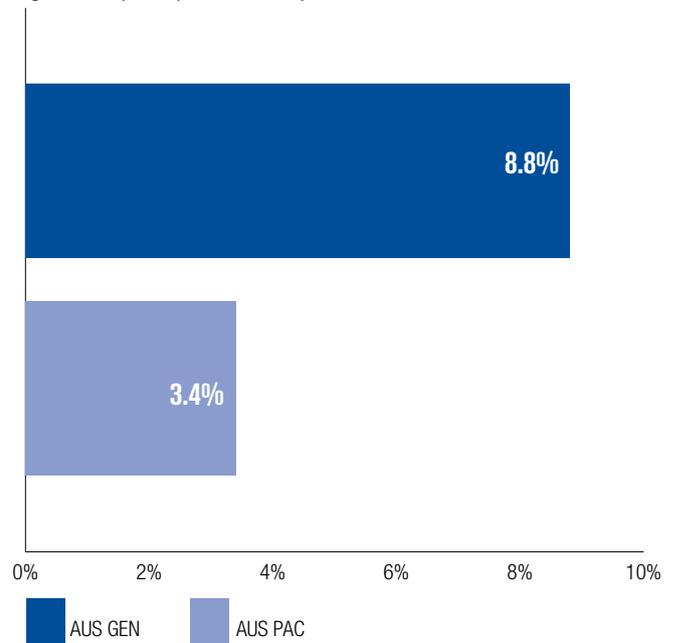
A third of Pacific families have a natural or adopted child under the age of 15 at 27.6% of the Pacific population (Figure 10); this is in stark comparison to Australia's general population in which only 16.9% have a natural or adopted child under the age of 15. Pacific families also have a slightly higher rate for non-dependant adopted or natural children.

Figure 11: (RLHP) Relationship in Household – Marriage



Pacific people in Australia also have a higher rate of de facto relationships than that of the general Australian population (Figure 11). This statistic is particularly interesting as Pacific cultures are inherently more conservative due to dominant religious beliefs in Pacific communities. The higher rate of Pacific de facto relationship could be due to younger generations having families younger. Furthermore, the expectation to marry and host a traditional wedding may discourage some people from marrying and thus choose to remain in a de facto relationship. This trend could indicate a shift towards younger Pacific generations pursuing a financially stable future as opposed to keeping cultural expectations. Pacific households are more likely to be made up of more than one family and are therefore less likely to be in a lone person household in comparison to the general Australian population (Figure 12).

Figure 12: (RLHP) Relationship in Household – Lone Person

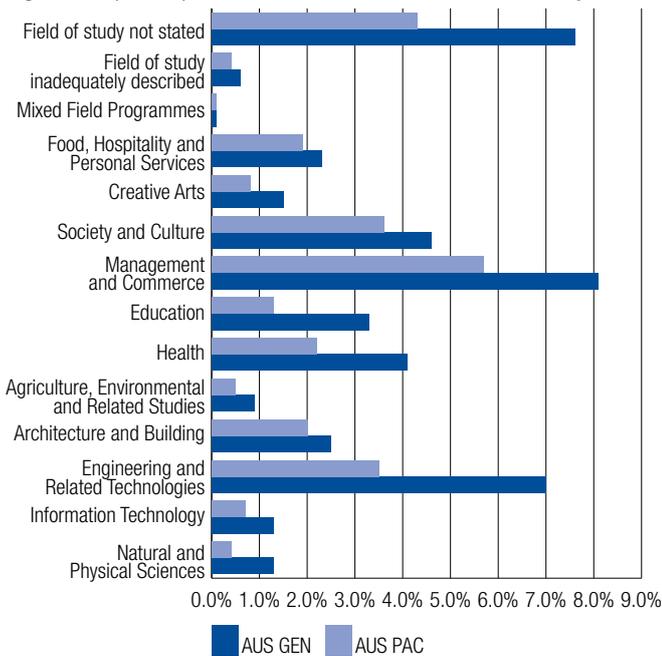


In the Pacific community, there is a greater pressure for Pacific adults to work as a means to provide for their families, as they are more likely to have a higher number of dependants. This may also reiterate the pressure for older children to take up employment rather than pursue higher education.

(b) Education

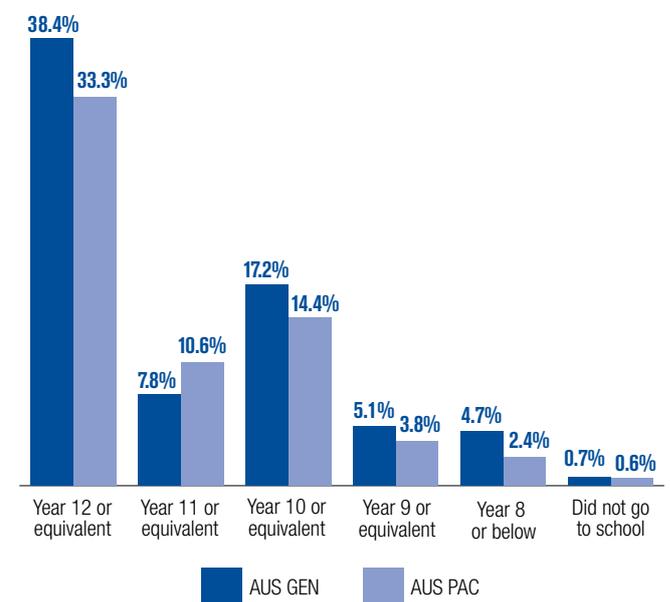
Access to quality to education is key to the improvement of a family's life. Educational achievement is linked with multiple positive outcomes, such as higher incomes, greater employment opportunities and therefore a better standard of living (Davis & Robinson 2013).

Figure 13: (QALFP) Non-School Qualification: Field of Study



For the Pacific community in Australia, the most popular field of study is Management & Commerce, followed by Society & Culture and engineering & related technologies. Interestingly, Pacific people studying creative arts are relatively low, considering the cultural connection to the visual and performing arts evident across this community group. However, this could be due to Pacific people not seeing creative arts as employment or a career path. As Pacific families are more likely to be larger than the general Australian population, business and financial career aspirations could be associated with the desire to help family in a field that is generally promised with a higher income in comparison to the humanities and creative arts (Figure 13).

Figure 14: (HSCP) Highest Year of School Completed – based on people aged 18 or older



Over half of the general Australian population is not studying at 54.9%, in comparison to almost 3/4 of the Pacific population who are not studying at 72.7%. The highest cohort of Pacific people that are engaged in tertiary education is between the ages of 15 – 24 years. Interestingly, Pacific communities have higher rates of their communities engaged in pre-school, primary and high school. In Figure 14, 10.6% of the Pacific population are going on to year 11 in comparison to the 7.8% general population. This could denote that the general Australian population were taking up a trade through an apprenticeship of traineeship pathway at year 10, while Pacific communities were committing to finishing year 12; but may exit at year 11. Pacific people have a slightly lower percentage of those in year 12 at 33.3%, in comparison to 38.4% of the general population. This could be attributed to Pacific people being more likely to leave after year 11 to seek employment to support their families due to cultural and societal pressures.

Figure 15: (QALLP) Non-School Qualification: Level of Education

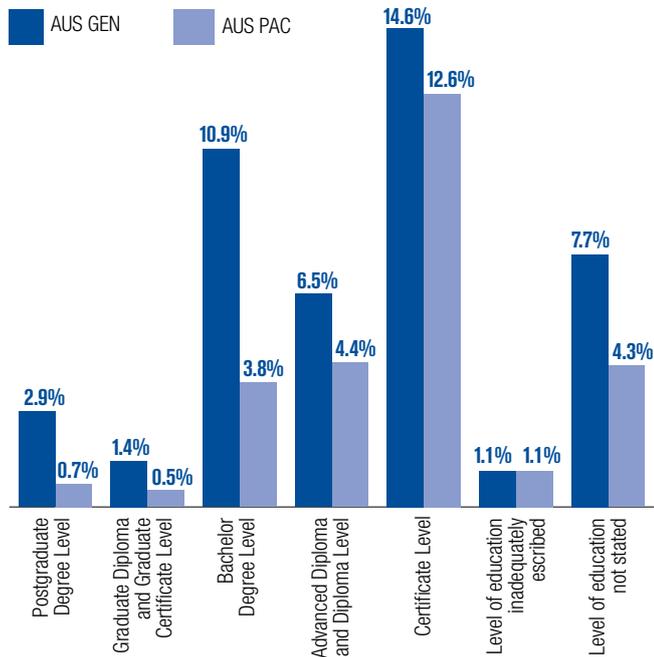
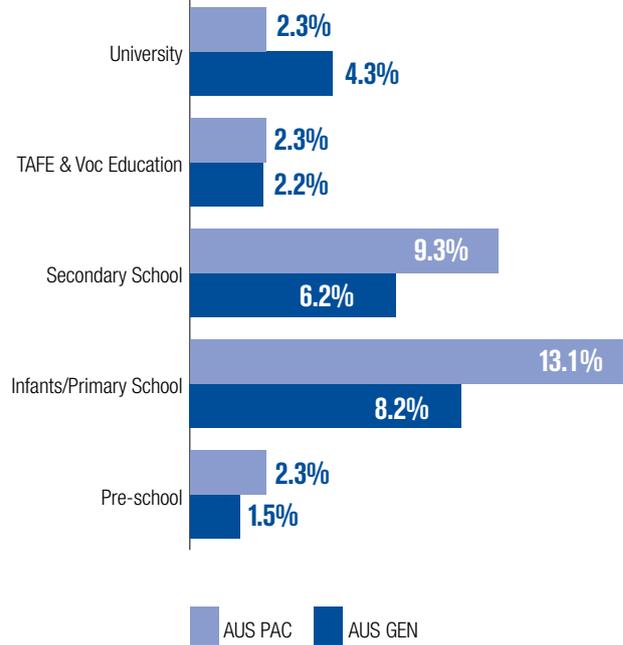


Figure 16: (TYSTAP) Educational Institution: Attendee Status



Close to three times of the general Australian population have a bachelor's degree or above, in comparison to the Pacific population who are predominantly undertaking certificate level education (Figure 15). This trend in Pacific people taking up certificate level could also be attributed to Pacific communities being more likely to wanting some form of trade qualification to practically support the ability to seek employment; rather than undertake an undergraduate degree.

It is evident that Pacific communities have an established level of those who are engaged in education within early childhood, primary and secondary levels (Figure 16); however Pacific communities are less likely to go onto University studies in comparison to the general population. Despite the stereotype, Pacific people are still achieving across educational levels, which suggest that it is not a matter of academic ability; but perhaps a lack of sufficient means, motivation and understanding on how to access higher education and training.



(c) Employment

This section provides data on areas relating to work in Australia. In terms of income, we see a decrease for Pacific people when they start to earn more than \$1250 (Figure 17). This may be attributed to the type of employment Pacific communities are likely to take up. More than double of the general Australian population earn \$2000+ or more in comparison to Pacific people. However, Pacific people work the same amount of hours as the general Australian population but due to the type employment Pacific communities are in, they are earning less (Figure 18).

Figure 17: (INCP) Total Personal Income (weekly)

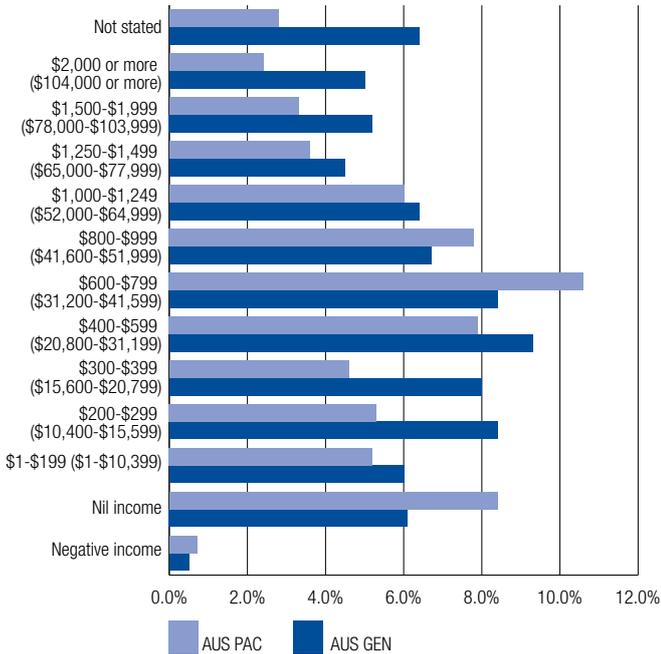
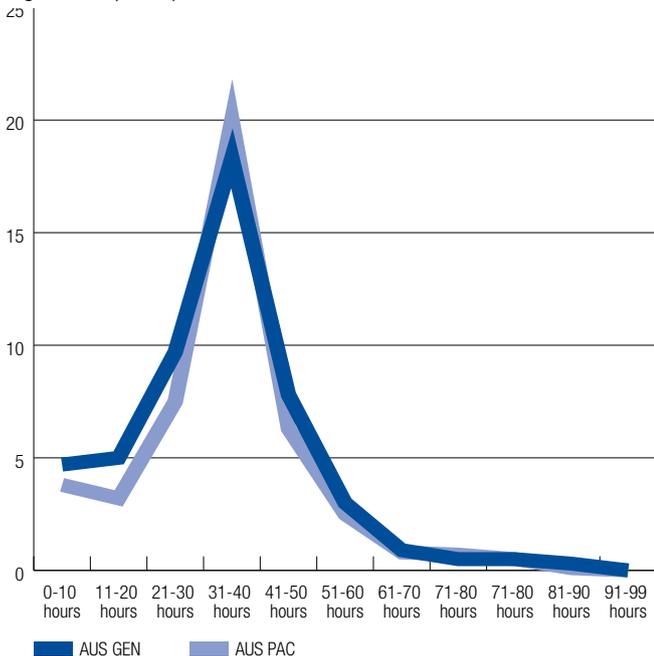
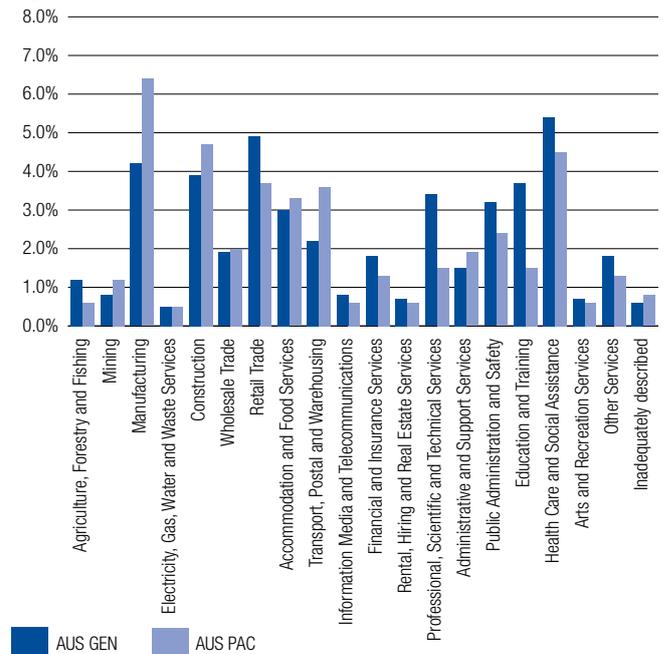


Figure 18: (HRSP) Hours Worked



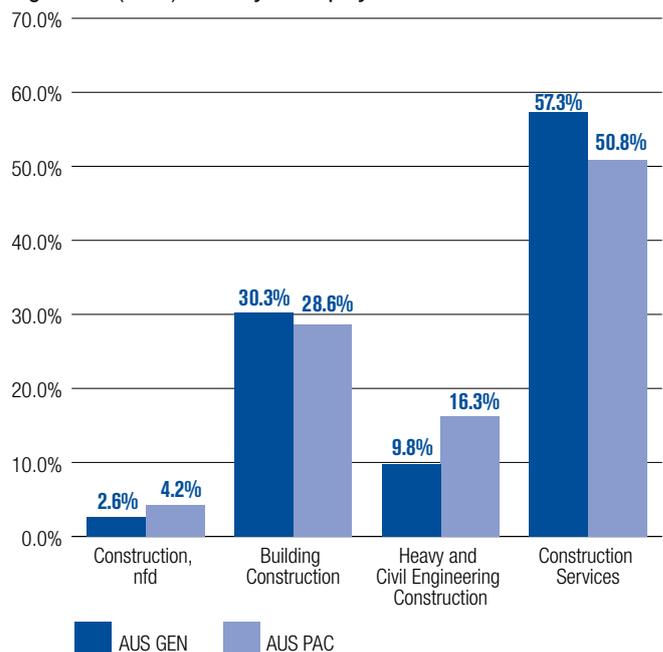
Pacific communities have a higher percentage of people in construction, manufacturing jobs, postal, transport & warehousing. However, in comparison to the general Australian populations (3.4%), only half the rates of Pacific people are in professional, scientific and technical services Industry (1.5%) (Figure 19).

Figure 19: (INDP) Industry of Employment



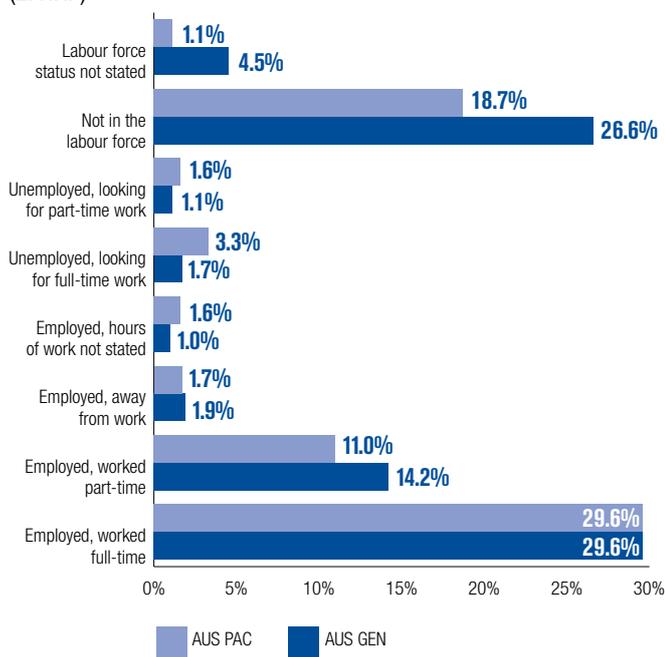
Similarly, only 1.5% of the Pacific communities are in education & teaching in comparison to the general Australian population 3.7%, which is more than double the rate of Pacific.

Figure 20: (INDP) Industry of Employment – Construction



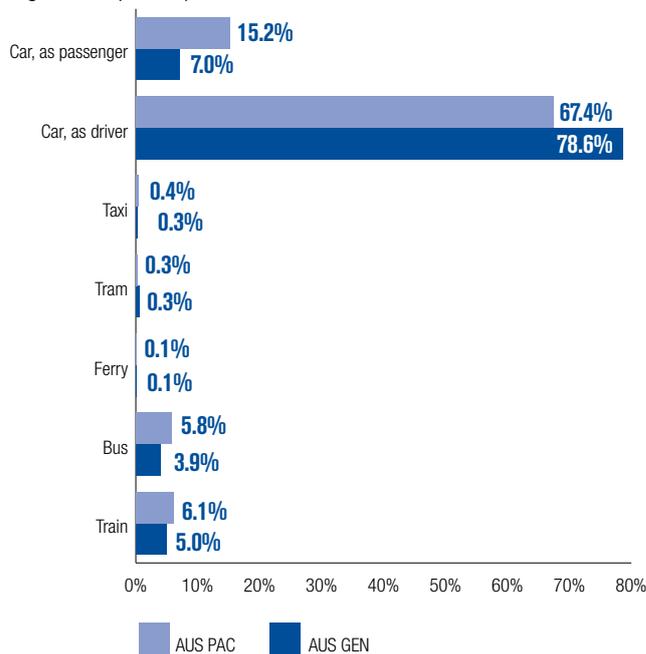
In the construction industry (Figure 20), close to double the number of Pacific people are in heavy & civil engineering at 16.29% in comparison to the general Australian population at 9.8%. Pacific communities are also less likely to work part-time (11%) when compared to the general Australian population (14.2%). This suggests that Pacific communities tend to prefer full-time employment; evident in 3.3% (almost double the Australian population) who are unemployed but seeking this level of paid work. This is further supported by the notion that Pacific families are characteristically bigger and therefore more likely to have more dependent family members (Figure 21).

Figure 21: Labour Force Status and Hours Worked Not Stated (LFHRP)



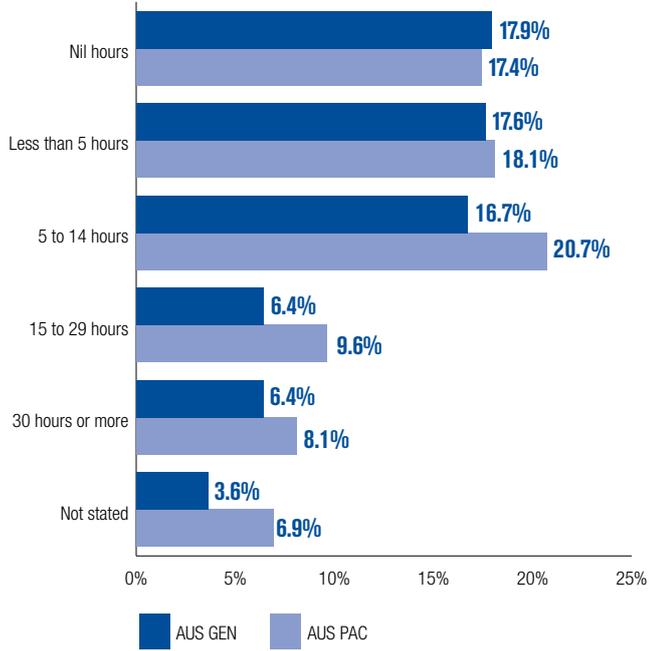
In regards to transport, Pacific people have a higher percentage of being a passenger in a car, than being the driver. A higher rate of reliance on public transport (bus & train) is also evident for Pacific people in comparison to the general Australian population (Figure 22). This may also be an extra strain on seeking suitable forms of employment, as it may limit areas where paid work opportunities can be sought due to access to reliable transport, alongside ability to consistently pay for this respective cost.

Figure 22: (MTWP) Method of Travel to Work



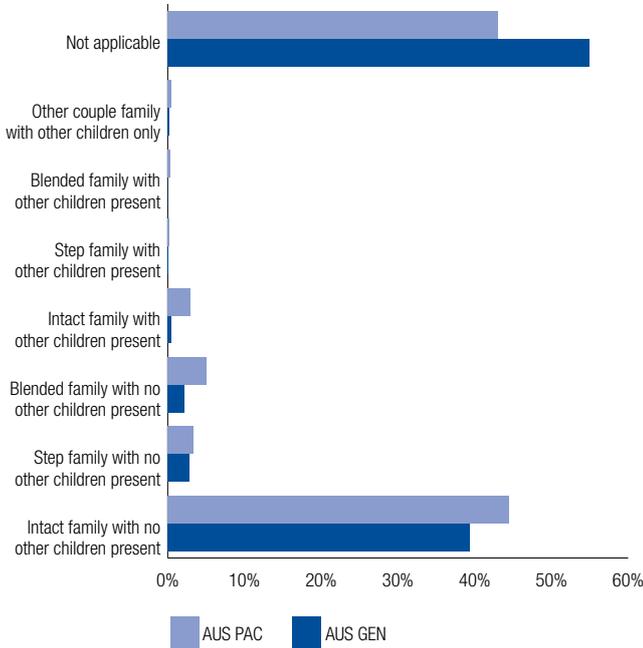
Pacific communities are more likely to be unemployed at nearly double the unemployment rate of the general Australian population. In comparison, Pacific communities are less likely to own or manage a business. Similarly, the Pacific people are less likely to undertake unpaid hours within employment. Since Pacific people are more inclined to take up lower-skilled jobs with lower income, there could be less of a chance that they will take up unpaid hours (Figure 23); particularly when taking into consideration the cost and availability of resources to travel to and from work, and the expectation to also be available to look after a higher number of dependants within the family household. Additionally, work places may not need Pacific people to undertake unpaid hours due to the shift work nature of this type of employment.

Figure 23: (DOMP) Unpaid Domestic Work: Number of Hours



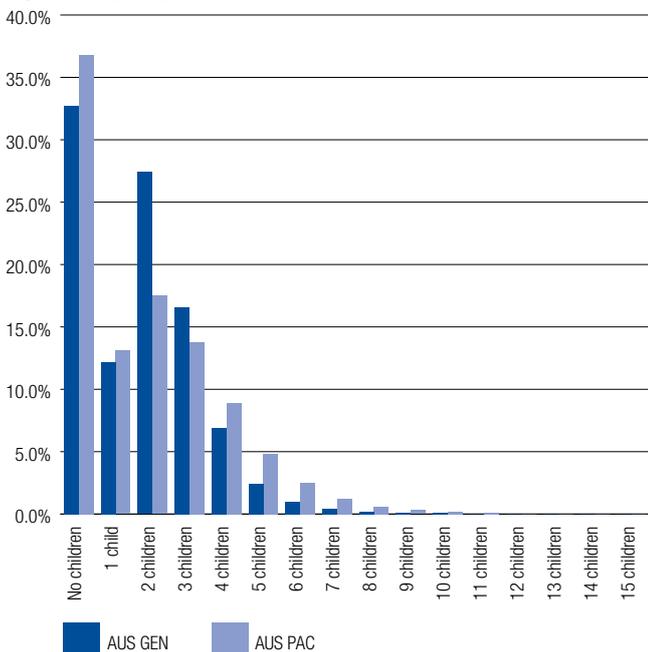
(d) Family

Figure 24: (FBLF) Family Blending



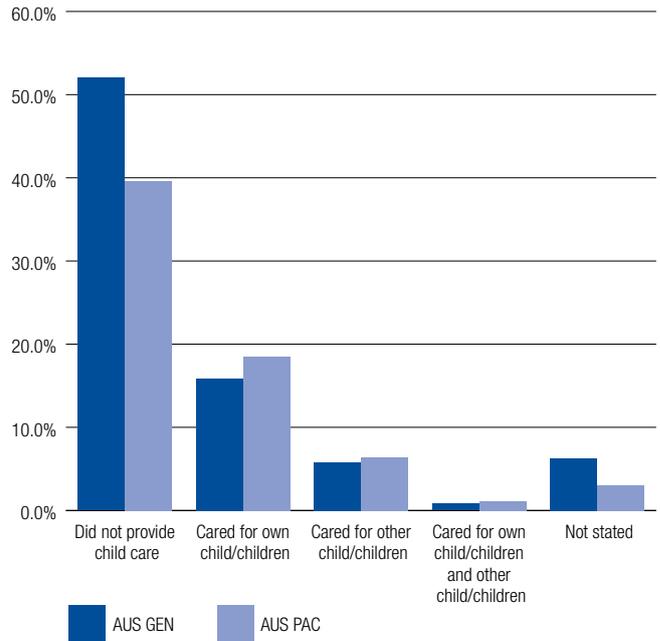
In comparison to the general population, Pacific communities are more likely to have intact families with and without children (Figure 24). However, Pacific families are also dominant in blended families at 5.1% and step families at 3.4%. Pacific families also have more children than that of the general Australian percentage; this is evident when looking at the 4 – 11 children categories in which Pacific families dominate (Figure 25). From the ‘Three children in family’ to ‘Six or more children in family’, we see that Pacific also dominate in those categories against the general Australian population. This once again reinforces that Pacific families are significantly larger.

Figure 25: (TISP) Number of Children Ever Born



In reference to childcare, we see that Pacific families have a higher rate of childcare responsibility, as well as a higher rate of Pacific people looking after other children (Figure 26). This is likely due to Pacific communities having more children, and the notion within Pacific cultures, communal sharing of childcare responsibilities.

Figure 26: (CHCAREP) Unpaid Child Care



In contrast to the general Australian population, couples with children under 15 (no dependent students, and non-dependent children) are quite high, even in the one-parent categories (Figure 27). We do however see a relatively higher amount of Pacific families with children under 15, but are not dependent students. This could be due to a higher number of Pacific families with younger children who are not Infants/Primary school age.

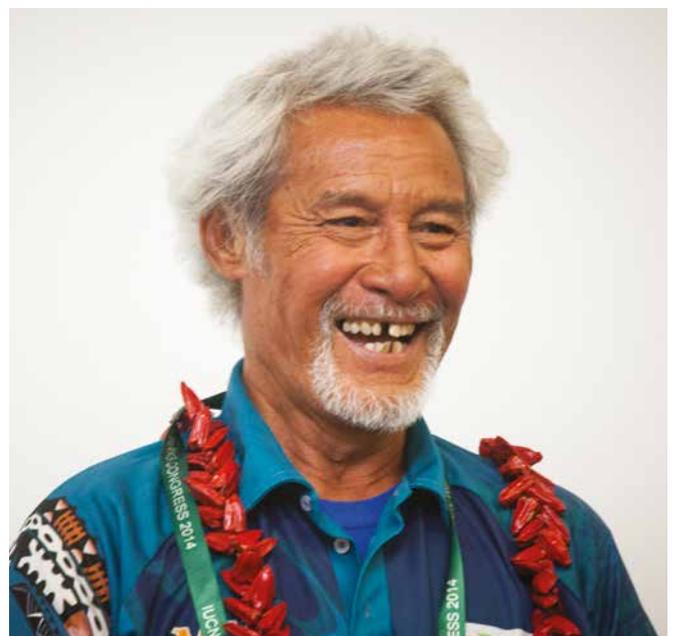
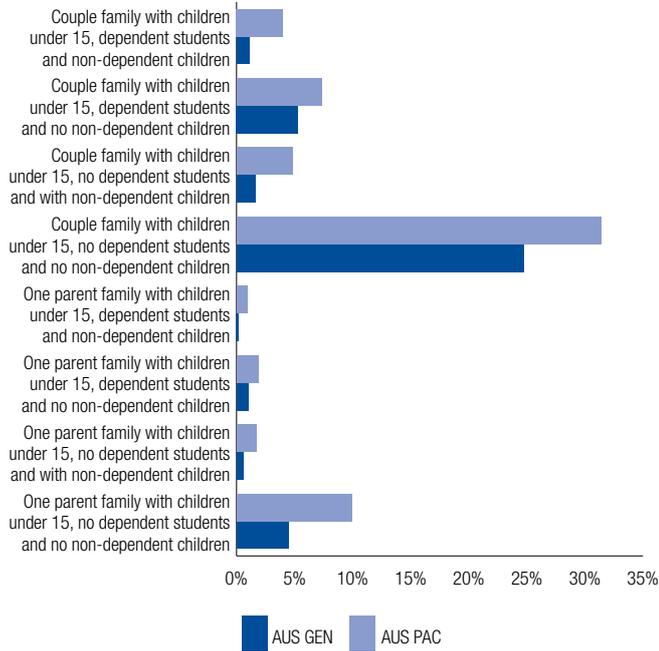
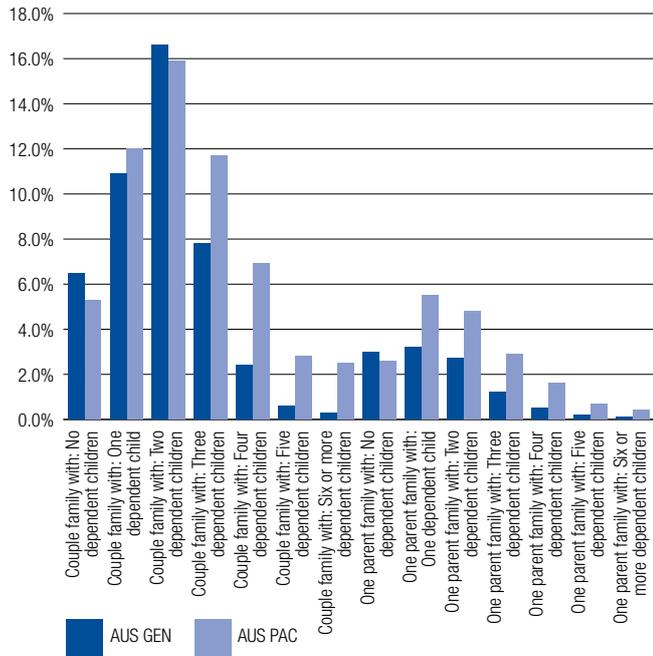


Figure 27: (FMCF) Family Composition



Interestingly, as Pacific families are generally larger, we find dependent children being closer in age to each other (Figure 28). Once again, this may create a level of caring responsibility for parents to maintain, with the support of other extended family members who may assist with childcare and other related child rearing practices.

Figure 28: (CDCF) Count of Dependent Children in Family



When comparing the 'count of persons in family', Pacific families are four times more likely to have six or more persons in a family at 20.6% in comparison to the general Australian population at 5.2% (Figure 29).

Figure 29: (CPRF) Count of Persons in Family

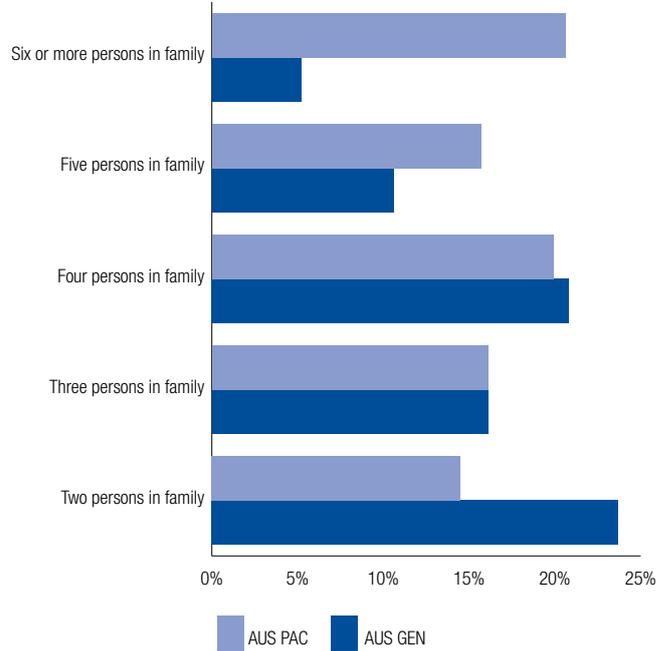
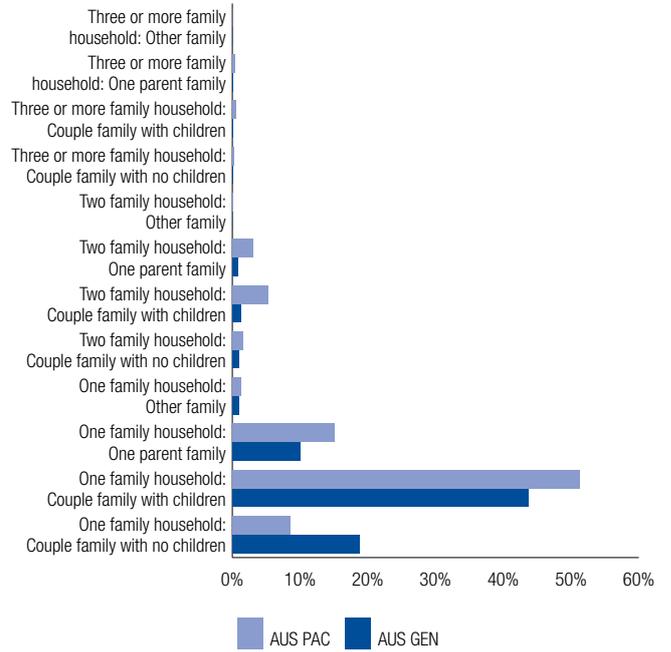
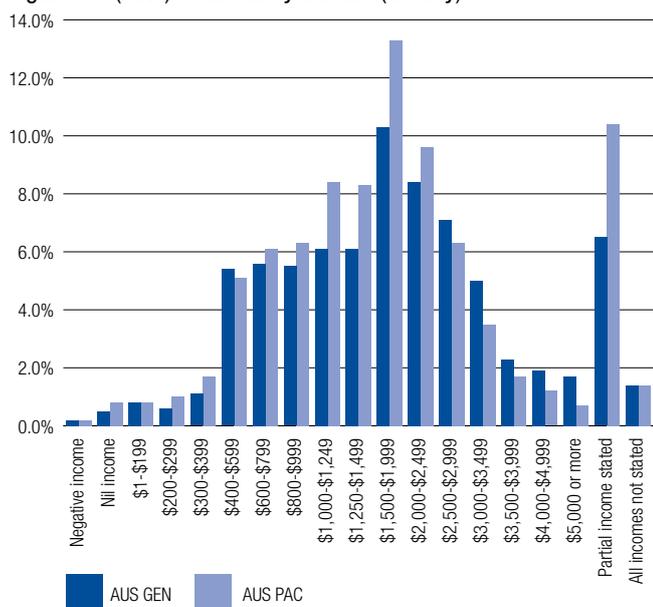


Figure 30: (HCFMF) Family Household Composition



In Figure 30, the 'One family household: One couple with no children' category is relatively lower for the Pacific population at 8.6% in contrast to the general Australian population (18.7%). We see the differences spread highly among other categories for Pacific. We also see that in the 'two family household with children categories' and the 'three or more family household categories', the Pacific population are three times higher than the general Australian household composition. With regard to the two or more family households for the Pacific population, this could be attributed to extended family staying within another family's household. It is important to note that while Pacific families are culturally inclined to have more than one family in one household, access to affordable housing in Australia also plays a significant role as to the possible reason why more than one Pacific family may need to live in one household. Furthermore, because the Pacific population are more likely to use public housing (as further discussed in Section 5) this also offers a sense of community for a population that is inherently communal, and relies on kinship ties beyond the nuclear family structure.

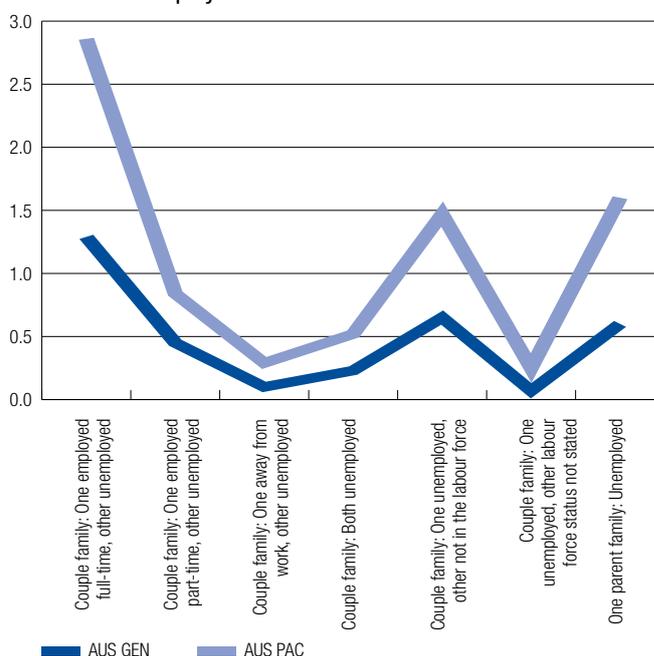
Figure 31: (FINF) Total Family Income (weekly)



When comparing 'total weekly family income', the data presented shows that Pacific families earn relatively on par with the general Australian population with only a slightly lower weekly family income (Figure 31). However, it is important to acknowledge that Pacific households have more people earning in one household. This is due to the fact that Pacific households are larger and could have more people earning to support a bigger group of individuals. Therefore, the weekly income that one family in the general Australian population would earn, may take one or more people living in the one Pacific household to earn.

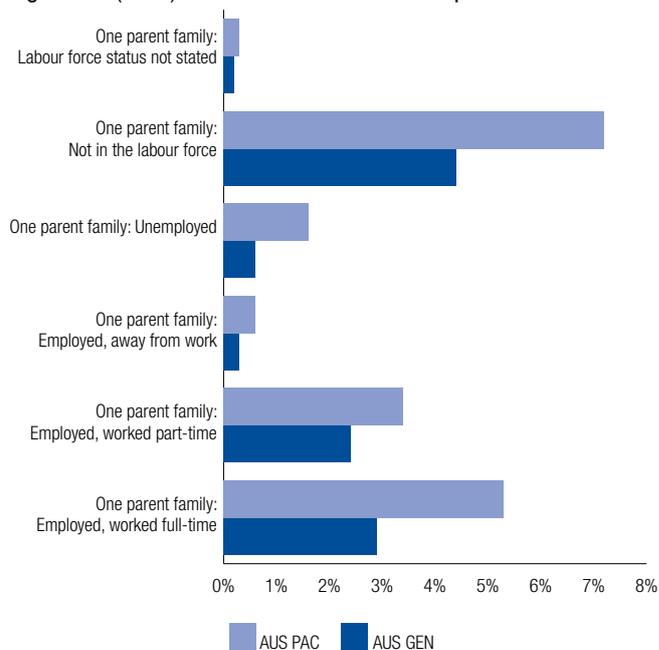
With regard to the 'labour force status of parents / partners in families', across the 7 unemployment variables, the unemployment rate for Pacific families is higher than the general Australian population across all areas (Figure 32);

Figure 32: (LFSF) Labour Force Status of Parents/Partners in Families – Unemployment



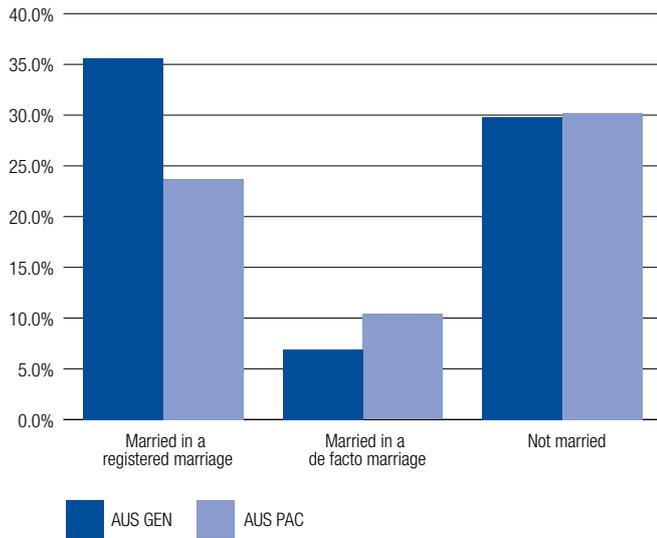
However, we also see a high rate of families where one parents works either in part time and full time, and the other is unemployed. This could be due to the high number of families opting for childcare at home, coupled with their inability to find full-time employment, and the affordability to place children in paid care (Figure 33).

Figure 33: (LFSF) Labour Force Status – One parent families



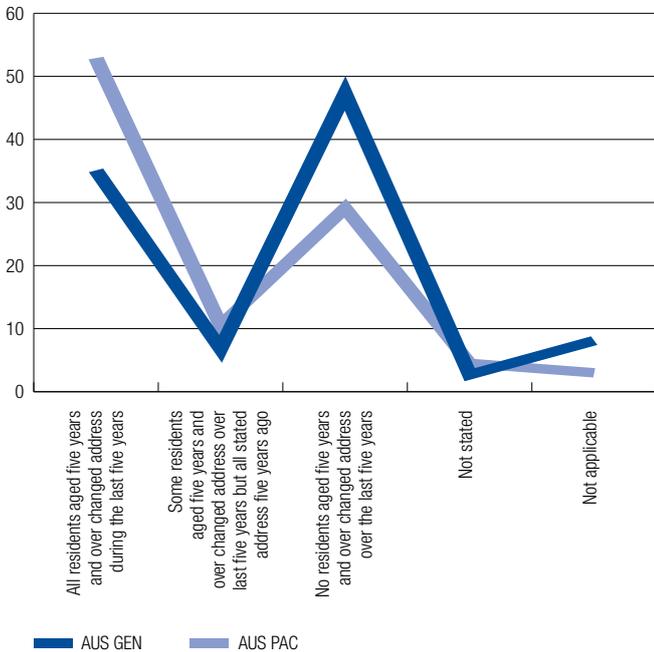
Furthermore, it is also interesting to note that a significant percentage of Pacific people are never married (Figure 34). However, this could also be due to the Pacific communities' youthful population. The Pacific population also have slightly higher rates of separation at 2.7% in comparison to the general Australian population at 2.5%. The 'Not applicable' category for the Pacific population, which stands at 35.7%, also supports the claim that the Pacific community is a youthful population.

Figure 34: (MDCP) Social Marital Status



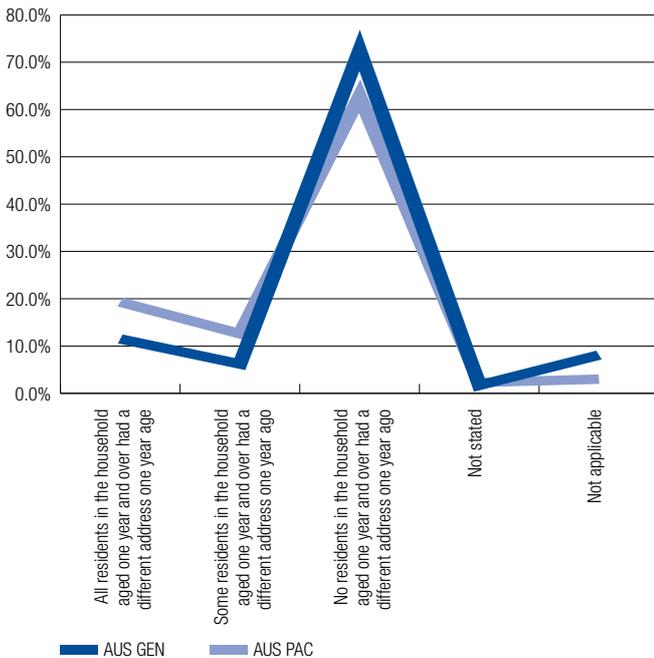
(e) Household

Figure 35: (MV5D) Household Five Year Mobility Indicator



When comparing household mobility, Pacific communities are more likely to change addresses within a period of five years (Figure 35). Furthermore, the general Australian population are twice more likely to remain in a stable home over a period of one year in comparison to the Pacific population. (Figure 36)

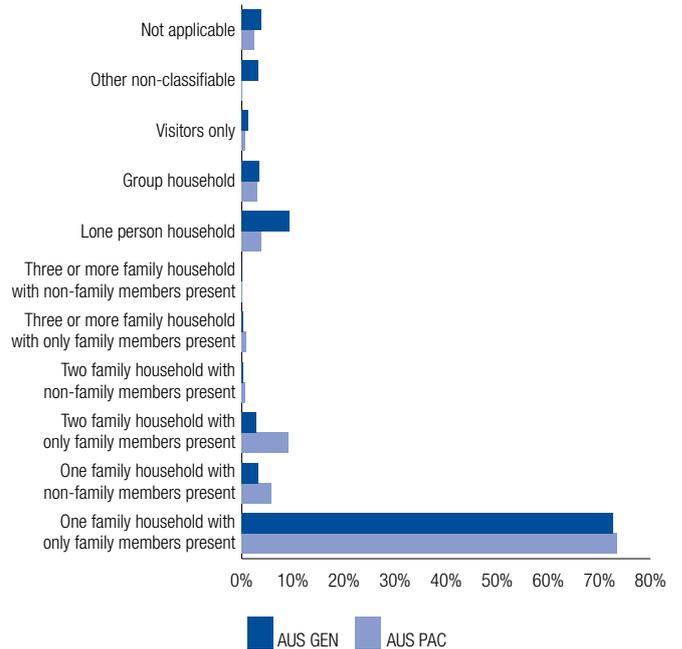
Figure 36: (MV1D) Household One Year Mobility Indicator



The composition of Pacific households also speaks to the Pacific community being more communal in comparison to the general Australian population. For example, the Pacific population are three times more likely to have a ‘Two family household with only family members’ at 9.2%, in comparison to the general 2.9% (Figure 37). Furthermore, Pacific families are four times more likely to have a ‘three or more family household with only family members’.

Pacific families are slightly more likely to have a ‘one family household with only family members present’ at 73.5%, while the general Australian population sit at 72.6%.

Figure 37: (HHCD) Household Composition



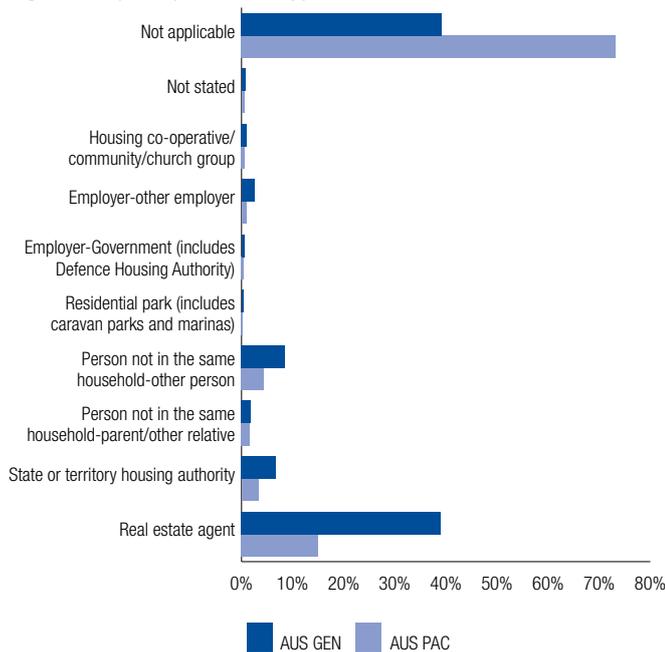
When comparing the ‘number of person usually in a dwelling’, Pacific families are significantly larger when there are five or more persons in a dwelling. Furthermore, the Pacific population are eight times more likely to live in dwelling with 8 or more person (Figure 38). Generally, Pacific families are significantly larger, however when taking into consideration the average number of bedrooms in a home for a Pacific family, they are still residing predominately in a home with 3 bedrooms. This could suggest that Pacific communities in Australia are much more susceptible to overcrowding in homes. Further issues around health related problems due to space might also develop (Statistics New Zealand & Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs 2011).

Figure 38: (NPRD) Number of Persons Usually Resident in Dwelling



Pacific families are two times more likely to live in public housing at 6.7% in comparison to the general Australian population (3.3%) (Figure 39). Pacific families are also more likely to rent.

Figure 39: (LLDD) Landlord Type



Pacific people in Australia are also two times more likely to need supported accommodation (Figure 40). Supported accommodation services in Australia is predominantly targeted towards the homeless; this therefore suggests that while Pacific families are larger, they are more vulnerable when it comes to finding housing in contrast to the general Australian population. This data could speak to two issues facing Pacific households; a) There is a serious housing issue for Pacific people in Australia b) there could be a breakdown in cultural and familial ties, if homelessness is higher for Pacific peoples who are inherently a communal culture.

Figure 40: (SAFD) Supported Accommodation Flag

	AUS GEN	AUS PAC
Supported accommodation	0.08%	0.19%
Not applicable	99.92%	99.81%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

In terms of 'Tenure and landlord type', the general Australian population are four times more likely to outright own a home at 25.6%, in comparison to the Australian Pacific population at 6.0% (Figure 41). Pacific communities in Australia are less likely to own a home with a mortgage at 28.4%, in comparison to the general population at 38.1%. Additionally, Pacific communities in any type of rental property are more than double the general population at 60.8% in stark contrast to 26.8% (Figure 42). These statistics strongly supports the claim that housing is a significant issue for Pacific communities in Australia.

Figure 41: (TENLLD) Tenure and Landlord Type – Mortgage

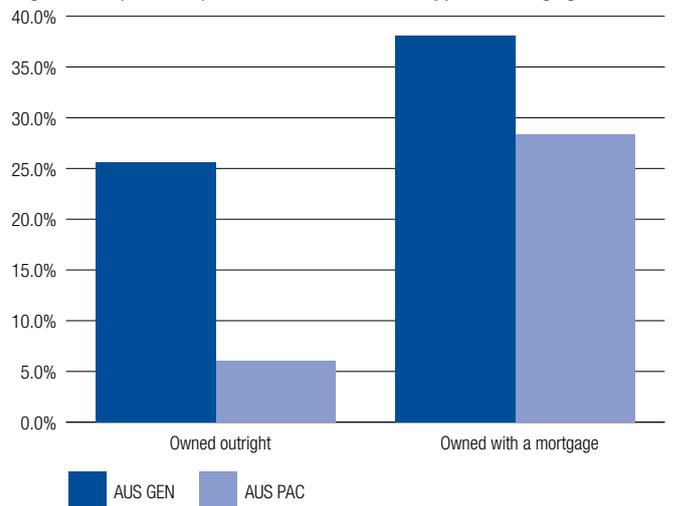
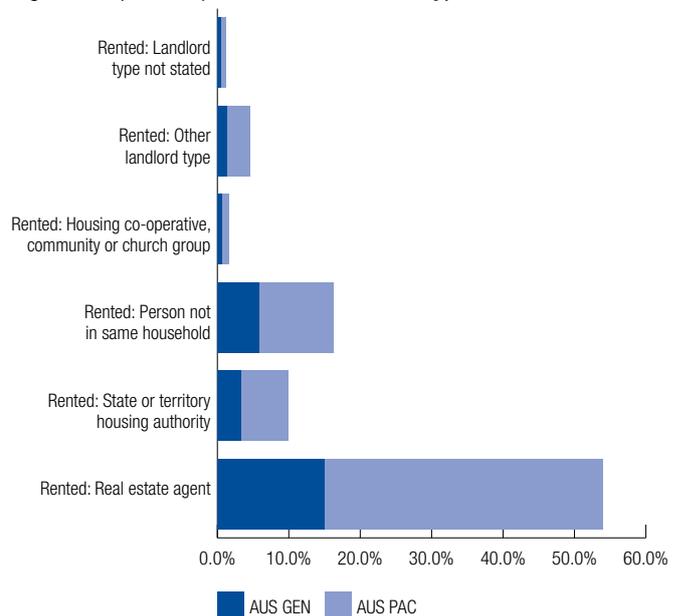
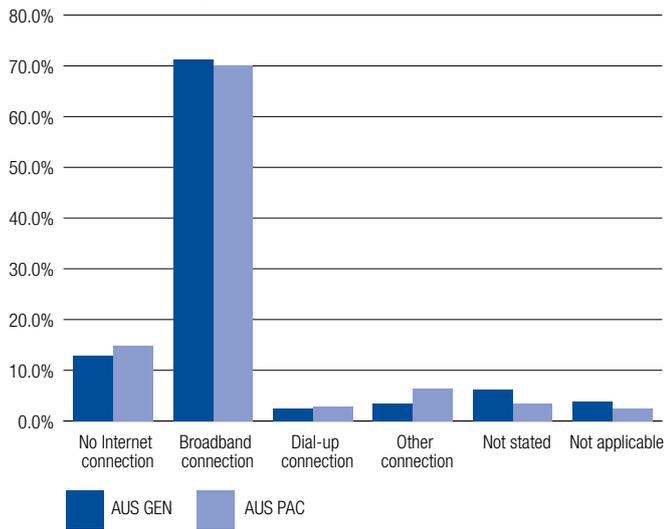


Figure 42: (TENLLD) Tenure and Landlord Type – Rent



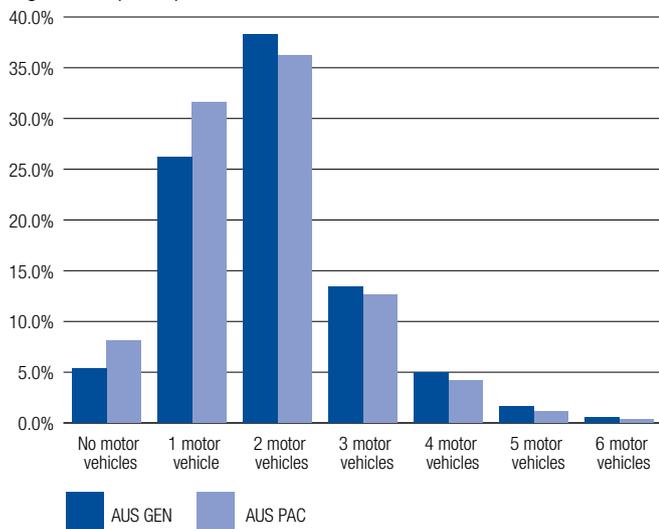
Despite Pacific families having more housing mobility and living in overcrowded circumstances; with more than one family per household, Pacific people have relatively the same rate of access to the Internet (Figure 43). Therefore, access to digital technology may further support educational aspirations if respectively promoted.

Figure 43: (NEDD) Type of Internet Connection



Pacific people are less likely to own a vehicle (Figure 44). This is despite Pacific communities having larger families. However, a larger percentage of Pacific families do own one vehicle to nonetheless transport more than one family per household. This may also suggest that there is limited access or mobility to take up educational and/or employment options when they are a further distance away. Therefore, Pacific communities are pushed towards using public transport, which may cause extra financial strain considering Pacific people as individuals earn significantly less than the general population.

Figure 44: (VEHD) Number of Motor Vehicles



Concluding reflections

When reviewing the data in terms of the current demographic and socio-economic context outlined in the above statistics, despite only constituting 1.3% of the Australian population, the Pacific community are set to rapidly grow to 3% in the coming decades (College of Asia & Pacific 2014).

Pacific people will continue to be a vibrant and youthful part of an ageing Australian population. There are particular social trends that are specifically impacting on the well-being of Pacific communities in Australia. Housing conditions in terms of accessibility and affordability are somewhat a concern for Pacific families in Australia with issues of overcrowding and an increased reliance on rental accommodation.

It is evident in the data presented that cultural and societal factors (Figure 45) both play a key role in influencing Pacific communities. For example, the need to pursue employment to support larger families (cultural factor) is due to the lack of access to social security benefits and tertiary study loans (societal factor). This is also despite good completion rates in year 11 and 12. Pacific communities also have a high mobility of moving houses within a 1 – 5 year period due to housing availability (societal factor) to cater for more than one family in a household (cultural factor), which may then have a significant impact on the ability to access and commit to ongoing education or employment (societal factor) that sustains financial stability and social mobility.

Figure 45: Examples of Cultural & Societal Factors impacting Pacific communities

CULTURAL FACTORS	SOCIETAL FACTORS
Type of employment obtained reflects desire to work Full-time vs. Part-time jobs	Pressures to earn as many Pacific people are not eligible for benefits.
Higher number of people in Pacific households	Housing availability across region where Pacific people reside
More families in one household, where caring responsibility for children is shared.	Inability to afford paid care for larger group of dependant children
Household income larger due to more people in one household	Overcrowding in homes due to a lack of affordable housing
Lower rate of divorce despite higher rate of separation and de facto relationships	Lower divorce rates and higher de facto relationships due to financial costs
Possible disharmony within families influencing higher percentage of Pacific people requiring supported accommodation	Pacific household less likely to have sufficient number of bedrooms which may lead to social, health and educational issues

Recommendations

- Further research around relationship patterns and reasons that may influence certain trends to occur.
- Further research towards Pacific people accessing pathways in vocational trades (apprenticeships/traineeships).
- Further research on how to promote living conditions that support larger families in smaller homes.
- Promoting synergy between Pacific research and Pacific needs in order to better map key findings and solutions that support effective service provision in Australia.
- Improved recording and access of specific data on Pacific people involved in prisons, corrections, youth justice, and immigration detention centres.
- Enhanced culturally appropriate and inclusive services to help with Pacific families transition and settle into Australian society.
- Promoting the use of technology within Pacific families to develop vocational and career aspirations.



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