



**Submission by**  
**The Employers and Manufacturers Association**  
**(EMA)**

to the  
**Ministry for Pacific Peoples**

on the  
**Long-term Insights Briefing**

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## About the EMA

The EMA has a membership of more than 7500 businesses, from Taupo north to Kaitaia, employing around 350,000 New Zealanders.

The EMA provides its members with employment relations advice and legal services from industry specialists, consulting services in HR, ER and Health and Safety, Collective Bargaining negotiation, a People Experience Practice and Advocacy at both Central and Local Government levels for its members to help their businesses and people businesses to grow.

The EMA also advocates on behalf of its members to bring changes in areas that can make a real difference to the day-to-day operations of our members including RMA reform, infrastructure development, employment law, skills and education, health and safety and export growth.

The EMA is also part of the BusinessNZ network.

## CONTACT

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## Introduction

The Long-term Insights Briefings (LTIBs) are a new government requirement under the Public Service Act 2020. They require agencies and government departments to think at least 10 years ahead, examining future trends, risks and opportunities that could affect Aotearoa New Zealand.

This topic, *Improving Pacific data equity: Opportunities to enhance the future of Pacific wellbeing*, explores the government's current data eco-system and how past and present ways of collecting, processing, analysing and interpreting data has led to inequities for Pacific peoples. It also identifies three focus areas to achieve data equity for Pacific peoples to enhance the wellbeing of our communities.

The below questions were asked in the second round of public consultation, focused on the detailed LTIB content.

### **Has this paper helped you understand the issues that exist for Pacific data within Government data systems? If not, please tell us why not.**

Yes, this paper effectively covered the issues that exist for Pacific data within the Government data systems. The paper explains how past and present ways of collecting, processing, analysing and interpreting data has led to inequities for Pacific peoples.

The main issues that exist for Pacific data are the lack of standardisation across Government, the grouping of diverse Pacific peoples, the Western lens placed on data collection, and a lack of feedback of the data into Pacific communities.

The lack of standardisation across Government results in several Pacific cultures being classed as 'Other Pacific' or only being classed as one ethnicity when they are multiple ethnicities. There are many diversities amongst Pacific peoples, and it is wrong to group these together. Pacific peoples are often suppressed in data due to low numbers.

The Western lens placed over data collection disadvantages Pacific people. Mainstream markers of success, such as individualism and capitalism, do not capture the nuanced narrative of Pacific people. The data produces a deficit story, with no understanding of Pacific complexities. Fieldworkers are often unfamiliar with Pacific community customs. There are also linguistic and digital barriers to data collection.

The lack of feedback of data into Pacific communities negatively affects trust and confidence in the Government and their data collection processes. This further perpetuates the inequities in the data systems.

### **Do you think this paper identifies the right issues and opportunities to create change for Pacific data equity in Government and support Pacific wellbeing in future? Please give reasons for your answer.**

Yes, this paper identifies the right issues and opportunities to create change for Pacific data equity in Government and support Pacific wellbeing in the future.

The main opportunities to create change in Pacific data equity this paper identifies are standardising data across Government, adapting the current system to include the Pacific way of life, increasing the inclusion of Pacific data experts, and improving the feedback of data into Pacific communities.

There needs to be standardisation of how Pacific data is collected across Government. All Pacific groups need to be included individually and avoid being grouped together. If Pacific peoples are of mixed ethnicities, both ethnicities need to be included in the data.

The data collection needs to inform the nuanced narrative of Pacific peoples, recognise their cultural and geographical diversity, include the wider social structural context, measure beyond problems and address priorities. One way this can be achieved is through the inclusion of more qualitative data.

There needs to be more Pacific people involved in the data process. The Pacific workforce across the data system needs to increase, as well as collaboration with Pacific communities, and co-design with Pacific data experts. Growing Pacific expertise and cultural capability to support an equitable data ecosystem across the public service is essential.

### **Aside from the focus areas we have identified, what else do you think would support Pacific data equity?**

The EMA is supportive of progressing the amnesty for the estimated 14,000 to 16,000 people classified as overstayers, prioritising Pacific peoples which we understand to be the largest group.

Granting this group amnesty would enable inclusion in the systems that data would be gathered from. The lack of a visa for one or both adults in a household encourages those people to participate in grey or black areas of the economy, opening them up to exploitation and leaving generations of the same family in vulnerable positions.

Whole families avoid participating in, or being identified by, our health and education systems while promotion and other working opportunities are often rejected as overstayers prefer not to draw attention to themselves. If amnesty is not granted there will be an ongoing health deficit and inequitable future economic outcomes.

It is important to utilise Pacific community and Church groups in the interim to growing the Pacific workforce across the data system. Growing the Pacific workforce across the data system will take some time. Utilising community and Church groups during this time is an effective way to improve Pacific data equity.

### **What do you think are the issues that will impact Pacific data in the future?**

The issues that are mentioned in the long-term insights briefing (the lack of standardisation across Government, the grouping of diverse Pacific peoples, the Western lens placed on data collection, and a lack of feedback of the data into Pacific communities) will impact Pacific data in the future if they are not addressed.

The definition of Pacific and the need for dynamic data from specific communities of ethnicity and region will be important to inform decision-making and policy. It is essential that all diverse Pacific communities are included in future data collection.

It is important to improve the Pacific community's trust in Government. Pacific data needs to be easily accessible by Pacific people (individuals and communities) to ensure an ongoing trust in Government. Keeping Pacific people well informed of the status of their data is also useful to nurture the trust between them and the Government. Therefore, it is paramount for the Government

to reduce and remove any barriers regarding data access, given the importance of such taonga / koloa (data) to Pacific people.

**Do you have any further comments you would like to share?**

The EMA actively advocates for initiatives to try and increase workforce participation in New Zealand for members of the Pacific Island community, both to increase employment and to potentially increase wages for those workers.

The EMA is involved in the Pacific Pay Gap Inquiry, providing pathways for temporary visa holders to permanent residency, reopening the Pacific Island access visas and additional RSE workers, co-leading the Advanced Manufacturing Industry Transformation Plan with the CTU and MBIE, including a focus on developing the Pacific workforce, developing options with MSD for training and pastoral care for Pacific people in the workforce, encouraging greater participation, and the amnesty for overstayers.

Improving Pacific data equity will enhance the future of Pacific wellbeing and help improve social and economic outcomes for this group.