

Pacific Peoples and Settlement

Goal ten: Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy

Introduction

Pacific peoples share many of the same settlement issues faced by other migrants who have chosen New Zealand as their new homeland. What sets Pacific peoples apart, however, is their long history of settlement in New Zealand and their position as Auckland's second-largest general ethnic group after Pakeha/European. They currently make up 14 percent of the Auckland region's population¹.

Despite their longstanding settlement in New Zealand, Pacific peoples as a group have disproportionately lower incomes, higher unemployment, poorer educational outcomes and poorer health than New Zealand's population as a whole². In the absence of settlement-specific services for Pacific peoples, these disparities are believed to have been compounded by an over-reliance on Pacific host community members to support Pacific migrants to settle in New Zealand.

This chapter focuses on opportunities for government agencies to improve settlement outcomes for Pacific peoples in Auckland. It was developed as a result of engagement with the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs' Auckland-based, Community Reference Group (Reference Group)³ and central and local government agencies in the Auckland region. It reports on Pacific peoples' suggested focus for the Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy and the barriers and challenges faced in meeting pre-settlement needs. This involves accessing settlement-related information, advice and support during the initial settlement phase and taking a Pacific-specific approach in these areas. The roles and responsibilities of government agencies in addressing these issues are also described, along with opportunities for improving initial settlement support for Pacific peoples in Auckland.

Focus of *Settlement Strategy* for Pacific peoples

The Reference Group recognised that Pacific peoples have been significantly involved in developing Pacific strategies and initiatives across a wide range of government sectors to address socio-economic and other disparities they face in New Zealand⁴. They strongly believed that the *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* should not duplicate the work that had already gone into developing these other strategies. Rather, it was important that this earlier work fed into the work programmes for the *New Zealand and Auckland Regional Settlement Strategies* through individual government agencies, and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs. The

¹ See the Summary Report for more details on Pacific settlement within the Auckland Region.

² See the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Statement of Intent covering the 2005-2008 year for more details on the socio-economic status of Pacific peoples today. Available on-line at www.minpac.govt.nz.

³ This group comprises 45 members elected by Pacific communities in Auckland.

⁴ See Pacific Report.

Ministry has responsibility for reducing disparities for Pacific peoples through their policy advice and monitoring roles.⁵

The Reference Group's view was therefore that the *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* should focus on Pacific migrants' unmet needs, both prior to their arrival in New Zealand and at the initial settlement stage.

Barriers and Challenges

The Reference Group identified the following barriers, challenges and suggested approaches.

Appropriate and realistic pre-settlement information is not readily accessible

Those who are considering migrating to New Zealand require access to reliable and realistic information about the realities of the New Zealand way of life, including living and working here. In particular, it is important that Pacific migrants are prepared, in so far as possible, for the challenges associated with the transition from a rural village life to larger urban cities with unfamiliar protocols and behavioural expectations. This should include information about likely financial set-up costs before they arrive, and the ongoing cost of living in New Zealand.

Appropriate initial settlement information, advice and support is not readily accessible

There is a lack of settlement-related information, advice and support. This type of information needs to be delivered in languages and ways that are culturally appropriate and that will enable Pacific migrants to access the mainstream and targeted services they require to initially settle. At present, there is neither a co-ordinated approach between mainstream organisations and Pacific providers of settlement-related services, nor is there engagement with Pacific communities themselves. Given the need to be responsive to a range of ethnic Pacific migrants including those with limited English language competency, the Reference Group proposed that the capacity of current Pacific providers should be strengthened to undertake this role rather than establishing new service providers to fill these gaps.

A 'best-fit' approach for the provision of Pacific-specific settlement services is one that brings together Pacific host community members, including family units and churches, central and local government and non-government service providers. This is explained more fully in the Fale Concept outlined in Appendix 1.

Pressures on Pacific host families during initial settlement

⁵ See the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs Statement of Intent covering the 2005-2008 year for more details on the relationships and feedback loops between MPIA and central and local government and Pacific communities. Available on-line at www.minpac.govt.nz.

In the absence of appropriate settlement services over the past 40 years, Pacific host families have taken on the role of supporting new Pacific migrants to settle. This has been a major source of support for new Pacific migrants as they settle and develop social connections in New Zealand.

However, Pacific host families have struggled to support new migrants, particularly those that have not been able to effectively use mainstream services or achieve financial independence. In addition, expectations that Pacific communities living in New Zealand will contribute financially via remittances to families and communities 'back home', before they have prioritised their own financial needs, places pressures on Pacific migrants and their host families.

Settlement-related information, advice and support therefore need to be based on an understanding of the challenges Pacific migrants face. These include gaining and sustaining meaningful employment and affordable and appropriate housing, accessing education and training and the likely expectation that they will be making regular remittances to their families in Pacific Island countries.

Developing community understanding and acceptance of Pacific peoples

Like other migrants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Pacific migrants also face challenges as a result of the discriminatory perceptions of host community members. These impact upon their ability to achieve initial settlement goals such as accessing mainstream services and meaningful employment.⁶ They also impact directly on the ability of Pacific migrants to become independent of Pacific host family support and on wider community relations and their sense of identity and belonging. The Reference Group believes it is important to involve tangata whenua and other host communities in Auckland to promote understanding and acceptance of the contribution Pacific peoples can make to their communities.

Central government policy and service responses

Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs

The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs works to achieve a vision of "Social and economic prosperity for Pacific peoples" by overseeing the development of policies for Pacific peoples, including recent migrants to New Zealand. Although migrants from some island nations (Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau) are already New Zealand citizens by birth, they may experience the same issues facing other new migrants, including other Pacific peoples.

⁶ See *Increasing Understanding and Acceptance of Diversity* chapter.

The Ministry is currently collating information from the Pacific Prosperity Conference held in November 2005,⁷ as well as from additional research areas, as a foundation for the development of a Pacific Economic Development Strategy. When this has been completed, the Ministry will be working closely with key agencies to address economic development outcomes for Pacific peoples.

Department of Labour

The Department of Labour focuses on achieving good settlement outcomes for migrants and refugees through immigration policy and service delivery and through its broader interest in enhancing labour market performance and the working lives of all New Zealanders. Specifically, the Department provides national strategic leadership to the broader settlement sector, is the primary provider of pre-settlement information to prospective migrants, and the key co-ordinator and funder of targeted settlement information services for the initial settlement phase.

The Department established a Pacific Division in January 2005 in recognition of New Zealand's key relationship with the Pacific region and the significance of Pacific immigration to New Zealand. This Division spearheads the Department's focus on immigration, employment and skills choices and opportunities for Pacific Peoples and works closely with the Department's Settlement Division to promote positive settlement outcomes for Pacific migrants.

From January 2006, the Department's off-shore branches in the Pacific are progressively introducing enhanced arrangements for community outreach, assistance with the lodgement of immigration applications, employer engagement and pre-departure settlement information and assistance to new migrants.

Specific departmental initiatives for Pacific migrants include:

Pre-departure settlement information

- seminars within Pacific countries to ensure that Pacific migrants are adequately prepared for life in New Zealand;
- better matching of applicants' skills and potential with the needs of New Zealand employers;

Initial settlement

- assistance to access settlement-related information and services following arrival in New Zealand;
- a Pacific migrant budgeting programme which introduces realistic and workable solutions to Pacific migrants about ways to help their families, without compromising their own financial needs, and

⁷ Prosperity is succeeding or flourishing in all aspects of life – economic and financial, cultural and social, emotional, physical, spiritual, relational and familial. More information is available on-line at www.minpac.govt.nz.

informs them about the consequences of financial instability and the potential gains from good budgeting;

Supporting and involving host communities

- communicating with Pacific host communities through social and church networks to inform them what is being done to support Pacific migrants and how to access support services;
- seeking Pacific communities' perspectives from existing Pacific Division community networks, while involving the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and other government agencies on initiatives to support initial and longer-term settlement of Pacific migrants.

As part of its focus on improving settlement support, the Department is also implementing a national network of local support initiatives known as *Settlement Support New Zealand*. This has a dual focus of better co-ordinated provision of settlement advice and information, and more responsive mainstream services at the local level during the first two years of settlement.

There will be two components to the initiative as it is rolled out in local areas. The first involves mapping local settlement stakeholders and services, planning for local settlement needs and developing a local Settlement Network of stakeholders. The second component focuses on ensuring migrants and refugees have a clear contact point for accessing information, organising orientation and settlement workshops for new migrants and refugees and arranging for local service providers to come together for settlement-related discussions and workshops.

The Department has been assessing how the *Settlement Support New Zealand* initiative can best meet the needs of Pacific migrants in Auckland. A proposal has been developed for implementation in the South Auckland region from April 2006, from which it is anticipated that key learnings will be disseminated to other Settlement Support areas where Pacific migrants settle.

The local *Settlement Support New Zealand* service mapping exercise will provide useful, up-to-date information about the current capacity of Pacific organisations to provide settlement-related services, and whether this needs to be expanded. This information will be considered alongside the earlier results of the Pacific Capacity-Building Initiative undertaken in 2001 as a basis for determining what support is available, where the main service gaps are and what the capacity-building requirements might be.

The way forward: *The Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy*

Goals for Pacific migrants

Sustainable and good settlement for Pacific migrants was identified as a sense of belonging, identity, integration and empowerment so that they felt able to contribute and participate, socially and economically, as equal and valued New Zealanders.

The strategic goals for the initial settlement of Pacific migrants are to:

- *provide Pacific migrants with accurate and realistic information about life in New Zealand so that they can make informed decisions about immigrating and adequately prepare themselves in advance;*
- *ensure that there is accessible initial settlement information and advice available to support Pacific migrants to access services available to all New Zealanders;*
- *support Pacific migrants to settle and become independent, including through successful employment outcomes, so that the pressure on Pacific host communities will be reduced.*

Opportunities to improve initial settlement for Pacific migrants

It is recommended that the *New Zealand and Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* work programmes pick up the following proposals for improving the initial settlement of Pacific migrants in the Auckland region.

Service provision

- Apply the key learnings gained through the monitoring and evaluation of the Pacific-focused *Settlement Support New Zealand* initiative in South Auckland to other Settlement Support areas where Pacific migrants settle.

Pacific provider capacity

- Use the results of the earlier Auckland Pacific Capacity-Building Initiative and the local Settlement Support New Zealand service-mapping exercise to assist in considering whether the current capacity of Pacific organisations providing settlement-related services is appropriate and effective or whether it should be expanded.

Coordination between central and local government and Pacific communities

- Ensure that Pacific peoples' views are represented (through the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs) at the governance level and in the implementation of the *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy* and

that there are links between this and the *New Zealand Settlement Strategy*.

- Ensure that information gathered by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs as it continues to survey, monitor and link closely with the community and Territorial Local Authorities and central government agencies in the Auckland region, is fed into the ongoing development and implementation of the strategy.
- Councils in the Auckland region, not already doing so, should identify Pacific migrants as a specific target population for inclusion in their civic affairs and decision-making processes, such as the Community Outcomes process under the Local Government Act 2002.

Acceptance of diversity

- Include a Pacific aspect to the work that central and local government, non-government organisations, and community leaders undertake to increase host community acceptance of all migrants, including Pacific migrants, from diverse language and cultural backgrounds.⁸

⁸ This is discussed further in the chapter on *Increasing Understanding and Acceptance of Diverse Communities*.

Appendix 1

The Fale Concept

A **Fale Concept** is recognised as a firm basis for understanding Pacific migrant initial settlement needs.

This basic understanding is illustrated by the following diagram, which assumes three key aspects:

Creating solid foundations

For Pacific peoples the foundation to good settlement is the support from those already here in the host community. Such groups include family units and churches as well as those providing information and other service providers/networks (refer to upper diagram).

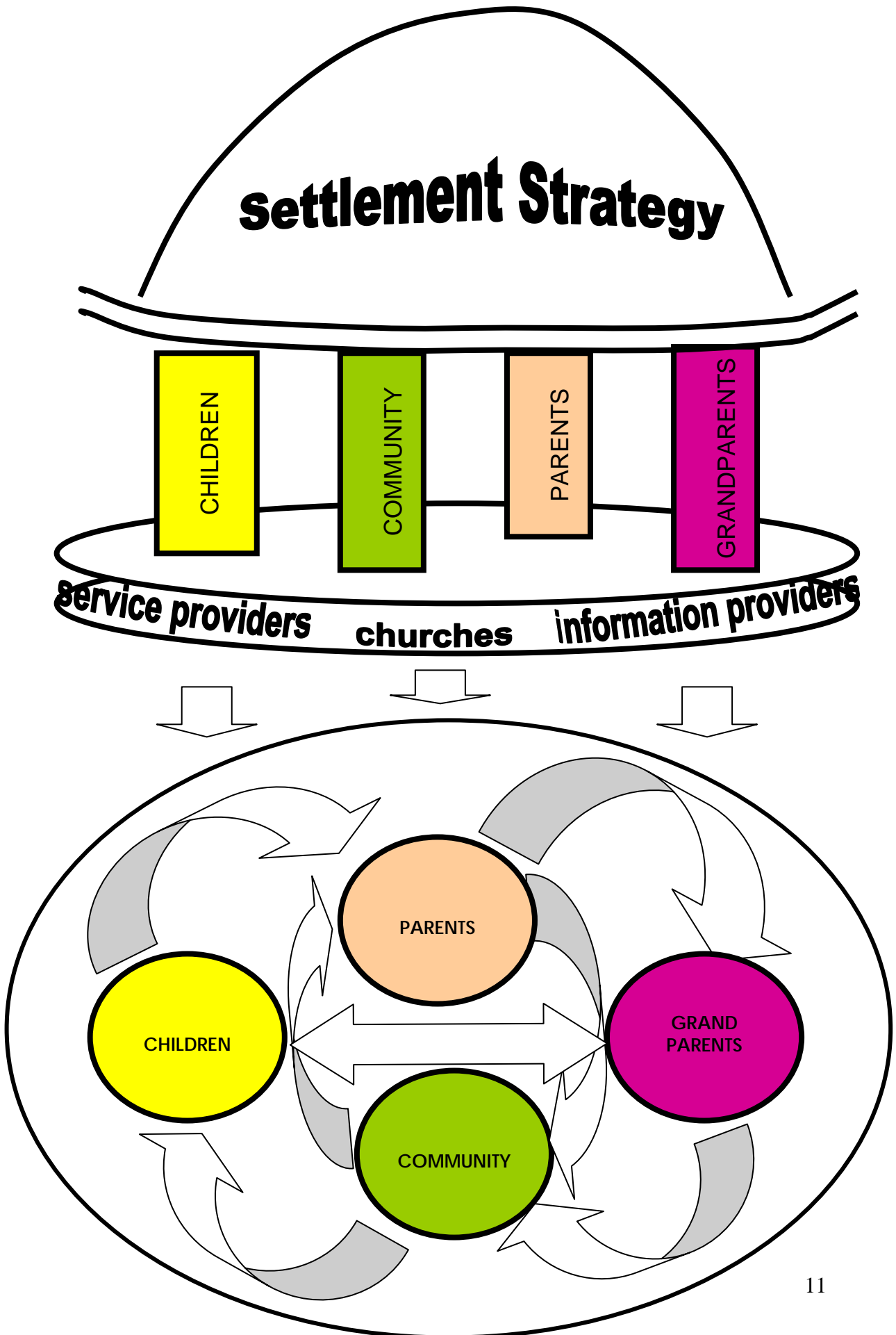
'Pou (pole) o le Fale' - That which holds up the structure's roof.

Each 'pou' or pole represents those that make up the Pacific communities, including children, parents, grandparents, the church community and the Pacific community at large. Each 'pou' works together and inter-relates with the other pou. Without one, the structure is incomplete and the structure's strength compromised. Each pou also has a rightful place and function in determining the settlement needs and decisions of its peoples. Similarly, each pou may also represent those areas where good settlement is measured - health, education, housing, access to services etc. (refer to upper diagram).

The protective roof

The roof is supported by each pou. In turn, the roof protects each pou and its foundations. Central/local/non-government organisations are the 'bones' of this roof, as parties to the *Auckland Regional Settlement Strategy*. They are responsible for protecting all the interactions, links and decisions for good settlement and ensuring they are made in the consensual and collaborative environment under the roof (refer to lower diagram).

The False Concept of Settlement: A Multi-dimensional View



Appendix 2 Department of Labour Settlement

The Pacific Division's objectives for pre-departure settlement seminars

To raise the awareness of Pacific migrants about the New Zealand way of life, so that they:

- have a realistic understanding about their new home;
- know what they need to get ready before departing, e.g. – save up for bond money, get academic transcripts, bank accounts etc; and
- know what they need to do immediately when they arrive, i.e., set up an IRD number, get their drivers licence converted.

The desired outcome for the pre-settlement phase is that Pacific migrants are prepared and confident before leaving their home for New Zealand.

The Pacific Division's objectives for initial settlement

To ensure Pacific migrants get off to a good start working and living in New Zealand, so that they:

- feel welcomed and safe;
- know who their regional Pacific contacts are for essential services and entitlements;
- are supported during their set-up;
- are introduced and handed over to a community service, non-government organisation; and
- are aware of the Pacific Division's initial and post-settlement services which are available to them as residents of New Zealand.

The desired outcome for the initial-settlement phase is that Pacific migrants are comfortable and able to implement their individual plan for settlement, knowing there is support they can access.

The Pacific Division's post-settlement objectives

- To support Pacific migrants' transition to independence; and
- To lead and effect the co-ordination of services at the national, regional and local level.

The desired post-settlement outcome is that Pacific migrants are independent and confident in dealing with day-to-day life, and achieving their potential.