

Pride, belonging & identity

Exploring access to and consumption of museum content by Pacific Peoples.



Lisa Reihana teacher's event for 'In Pursuit of Venus [infected]', 2021. Photo by Jo Moore. Te Papa (197001)



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"Foaki e tau lotomatala, ke monuina ai e tau atu hau tupu hake"

Gifting knowledge for the success of the next generation

Niue Language Writers Group

We would like to express our gratitude and respect for all the generations of Pacific peoples who have passed on their knowledge and wisdom to allow our success in the research and writing of this report. Our hope is that this legacy will continue to be shared and nurtured as we seek to make progress together in improving the lives of all Pacific peoples. We thank them for their invaluable role in our collective development.

Knowledge is created in relation with others, and this report has been no different.

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Gerald Naepi, Chelsea Naepi, Kate Jack & Dr Sereana Naepi

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Gerald Naepi



Dr Sereana Naepi



Pacific Store tour, 2015. Photo by Michael Hall. Te Papa

Executive Summary


Introduction

Pacific peoples are interested in museums. However, their historical exclusion from museums via curation practices has led to the development of museums in Aotearoa New Zealand¹ that have not always served Pacific communities well. Historical and contemporary relationships between Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific make Pacific peoples an important and growing demographic for the Aotearoa New Zealand cultural sector. The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) has outlined their commitment to Pacific peoples in their reports and has engaged in supportive practices, and we now need to explore how to deliver on these commitments. We must consider how museums in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond can better serve and engage Pacific peoples and provide deeper insight than is currently available in the literature. The current literature explores how museums engage with and present Pacific histories and taonga, but there remains little work on Pacific audiences. Notably, a lot of museum research that refers to Oceania and the Pacific relies heavily on Māori and Aboriginal Australian experiences. This report addresses the gap in research by engaging in an exploration of how actual and potential Pacific audiences view museums.

Pacific peoples' worldviews are centred in this research by utilising Pacific research methodologies built on the values of relationality, respect, and reciprocity. These values shaped how we approached the research, including a collaborative approach to survey design and the use of talanoa (a Pacific narrative enquiry method).

¹. Aotearoa New Zealand is used throughout except when referring to the settler state then this report uses New Zealand.





The findings are based on a survey (229 responses) and talanoa (25) conducted with Pacific peoples from September to December 2022 across Aotearoa New Zealand, by Matada Research Group Ltd. (Matada). A Pacific research team then worked collaboratively to analyse the data and created this report in partnership with the Te Papa team to provide the entire museum sector with a report that can shape future relationships and engagements between Pacific peoples and museums.

What follows is a call for an all-of-museum and whole-of-sector approach for museums in Aotearoa New Zealand to become places worthy of Pacific taonga storage and display whilst also being spaces that Pacific peoples can readily access. Importantly, this report is not for Pacific curatorial teams only. Instead, these findings suggest broader structural shifts and different approaches whilst supporting Pacific teams to continue their excellent work in telling Pacific stories and collecting and holding Pacific taonga.

Pacific peoples, no matter their level of engagement, are interested in museums; this is a fundamental takeaway from the report that disrupts current notions around Pacific peoples and museums. Our communities want to be able to engage and build relationships not only with the taonga within museums but also with the museums themselves. These relationships can be formed when museums become living, interactive, engaging and emotional spaces. Part of that journey is ensuring that museums are places of connection and belonging where Pacific audiences contribute to conversations about museums and the taonga within them. To deliver on this aspiration, museums across Aotearoa New Zealand must reconsider how they tell Pacific stories and engage with actual and potential Pacific audiences.

Pacific peoples aspire to have museums as relational spaces where they can connect to their own and others' histories and stories. First and foremost, conceptualising museums as relational spaces can change the possibilities and approaches for storing, collecting, and sharing Pacific taonga. Pacific peoples highlighted existing and new strategies that could help to shift museums into relational spaces where taonga are not only stored but also brought to life through Pacific community engagement. This includes strengthening co-collection, hosting more Pacific community events, and branching out to Pacific-specific pop-ups² and talanoa that empower Pacific peoples.

Currently, Pacific peoples enjoy museums as they offer a place to connect with taonga. Museums are also spaces that foster creativity and inspire Pacific peoples to connect with their history. Additionally, museums offer an opportunity to connect with family as they entertain children and empower Pacific parents to talk about their histories. However, Pacific peoples also noted that museums can be boring and out of touch which can discourage them from visiting. Overall, there is space in museums to build on what they do well while also challenging the status quo to imagine spaces that respond to Pacific audiences.

2. Pop-up is used expansively here to indicate temporary exhibitions, touring exhibitions and community-based exhibitions that enable Pacific peoples to access taonga in their community.

Sector Challenges

Actual and potential Pacific audiences identify several barriers to building relationships and visiting museums. The obstacles include travel, time, cost, and not being aware of what is on at museums. Interestingly, the talanoa space around these barriers made it clear that Pacific peoples feel that museums do not see Pacific peoples as a target audience. One way to ensure these relationships can be solidified is to imagine and engage with the Pacific community as a priority audience. Moving forward, the normalising of Pacific peoples as a priority museum audience will go some way to removing barriers to engagement.

Actual Pacific audiences' museum experiences can be improved by creating more dynamic, interactive, and engaging exhibits and activities relevant to Pacific peoples' personal stories and lives. These diverse and nuanced stories need to be told in mana-enhancing ways while involving Pacific communities. Regarding Pacific collections, this includes a renewed call for nuance and diversity in how the Pacific is represented. A story often revisited in the talanoa is when Pacific communities are invited in to bring their taonga to life through song, dance, arts, and laughter. Pacific peoples want their taonga to live and breathe to facilitate connection to museum spaces.

Sector Opportunities

Museums are essential in supporting all of Aotearoa New Zealand to connect with Pacific histories and build an understanding of Pacific peoples today. Pacific peoples envision museums that help non-Pacific peoples to understand Pacific peoples' histories and how those shape Pacific peoples' realities today. This is a vital role for museums in an increasingly divided political space. Museums can engage more Pacific audiences and support Pacific communities to share stories beyond Pacific communities and have an impact on relationships outside of the museum.

Pacific peoples are highly interested in Pacific collections but also, more broadly, in the wider museum collection. Different activities (exhibits, events, stored collections) also interest Pacific peoples. This variety of interest in content and activities indicates that Pacific audiences can be targeted for various exhibitions. This finding reinforces the need for more Pacific taonga while also serving as a reminder that Pacific peoples visit museums for multiple reasons, not just the Pacific collection. This challenge to stereotypes around Pacific audiences is important to consider when designing marketing or communication plans about museum activities.

The online space has enormous potential in addressing actual and potential Pacific audiences. Although Te Papa internal research showed Pacific Peoples are 9% of visitors to Collections Online, Pacific Peoples in the research were largely unaware of the digital museum space. Still, they were excited at the prospect of an additional way to engage with museums when introduced to the different museum platforms. Te Papa's internal audience surveys show that Pacific peoples who engage with their website are satisfied. These two findings from the research present a promising opportunity for Te Papa to deliver on Pacific peoples' aspirations for museums, including being spaces for nuanced and empowering Pacific stories,



particularly given that Pacific peoples highlight the importance of providing an accessible and engaging online presence for museums to serve their audiences in the digital age better.

Te Papa

Te Papa remains popular among Pacific communities. The friendly atmosphere, interactive exhibits, and special events were cited as highlights, with Pacific collections, art exhibitions, and play areas for children being among the most popular features. Interestingly in talanoa, these aspects of Te Papa were highlighted as promising practices for the wider sector. However, there is still room for improvement. Outside of accessibility for those outside Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington, Pacific peoples would still like to see more immersive experiences (for example, *Gallipoli: The Scale of our War*) and a more comprehensive representation of Pacific history and culture. Increasing the availability of Pacific artefacts and performances, providing affordable food options, and expanding live performances were identified as other areas for improvement. There was also a call to raise awareness and accessibility to the special collections and inform Pacific communities of the opportunity to view treasured taonga housed within the store rooms.

The commissioning of this report signals an important step towards Pacific communities by Te Papa. As a report, it also signals that Pacific communities anticipate embracing Te Papa and the wider museum sector in this step towards us. Overall, this report highlights that Pacific peoples are interested in museums, but barriers remain to strengthening relationships between Pacific peoples and museums. There is work to be done to bring museums and Pacific peoples together, but this work is possible and essential.

Recommendations

1. Te Papa call together museums across Aotearoa New Zealand to share and discuss report findings.
2. Te Papa run targeted advertising campaigns for Pacific peoples.
3. Te Papa develop Pacific-specific pop-up exhibitions, including space for talanoa about the taonga and how they impact Pacific people today.
4. Te Papa develop a Pacific 'educate to empower' digital programme for Pacific peoples and other communities to access.
5. Te Papa to keep investing in developing Pacific collections that reflect the diversity of Pacific peoples and the nuances of Pacific experiences.

These recommendations will be further explored in the Discussion and Strategies for Change sections at the end of this report.

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Context

Pacific peoples and museums in Aotearoa, New Zealand

Objectives

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) has funded this report to expand our understanding of both actual and potential Pacific audiences and their attitude towards the physical and digital museum spaces. The research explores the broad context of access to and consumption of museum content and services from a Pacific perspective: perceptions, interests, motivations, satisfaction, aspirations and needs.

Background

Pacific peoples are a significant part of Aotearoa New Zealand's history and growing demographics show we will continue to contribute to its future. Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural sector plays an important role in holding, sharing, and maintaining Pacific people's story both here and in the region. Scholarship on Pacific peoples and museums primarily focuses on curating the museum space, and more research is needed to build our understanding of Pacific audiences. Understanding Pacific audiences relies on having a sense of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand and our relationship with museums, particularly with Te Papa, the national museum. A broader scope of literature enables a deeper understanding of what Pacific peoples can access in museums and how different internal museum structures may shape that access.

Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand

Pacific peoples have a long history with Aotearoa New Zealand – one that spans from initial migration via voyaging to international colonial histories, and, finally, as migrants to the settler state of Aotearoa New Zealand to fulfil labour shortages. Pacific peoples' initial migrations to Aotearoa New Zealand to become tangata whenua cemented Pacific peoples as whanaungatanga to Māori and created bonds and relationships through culture and genealogy across Te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa.³ Scholarship and government have recognised these relationships and their importance to Aotearoa New Zealand today.⁴ Later settler-state approved and organised migrations for Pacific peoples focused on expanding colonial ties into the Pacific and fulfilling labour shortages in Aotearoa New Zealand.⁵ The migration story of Pacific peoples in the 1970s is that which most people are familiar with today. This migration is associated with the Dawn Raids, where racist immigration policies resulted in Pacific peoples being unjustly targeted in Operation Pot Black.⁶ A recent government apology for the Dawn Raids has increased public awareness of the event outside Pacific communities.⁷ Relevant to this report was the establishment of the *Teu Le Va* fund as part of the apology to support Pacific communities in recording and gathering their histories of the Dawn Raids.⁸

Pacific peoples' regional histories are also deeply tied to the New Zealand empire, which held racist views on Pacific peoples.⁹ This position can be seen through complicity in Blackbirding and violent, uncaring colonial administrations.¹⁰ These inequities, which were embedded during the colonial period, have continued today. An under-resourced education system was established under the colonial Pacific, designed to ensure Pacific peoples specialised in manual labour and had limited access to literacy and numeracy programmes.¹¹ As a result of these policies, Pacific peoples' access to higher education necessitated travelling overseas, ensuring that tertiary education was almost unattainable to most in the region.¹²

Pacific peoples today are a diverse and young population who contribute significantly to Aotearoa New Zealand.¹³ The 2018 census recorded approximately 381,600 Pacific people living in the country.¹⁴ Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand are a particularly young population, with a median age of 23.4 years, compared to a median age of 37.4 years for the total population.¹⁵ The Pan-Pacific label encompasses over 17 distinct ethnic groups. The ten largest Pacific populations in Aotearoa New Zealand are Samoan (47.9%), Tongan (21.6%), Cook Islands Māori (21.1%), Niuean (8.1%), Fijian (5.2%), Tokelauan (2.3%), Tuvaluan (1.2%), i-Kiribati (0.8%), Tahitian (0.5%) and Papua New Guinean (0.3%).¹⁶ Notably, the Realm Countries of New Zealand (Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau) have significant proportions of their population living within Aotearoa New Zealand. The majority of the Cook Islands Māori and Niue groups reside in New Zealand (90% and 94%, respectively), and over half of the Tokelauan population live in New Zealand (54%).¹⁷

3. Health Research Council of New Zealand, *Pacific Health Research Guidelines*, May 2014, 2, https://gateway.hrc.govt.nz/funding/downloads/Pacific_health_research_guidelines.pdf; Health Quality & Safety Commission, *Bula Sautu - A window on quality 2021: Pacific health in the year of COVID-19*, July 2021, 9-10, https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/assets/Our-data/Publications-resources/BulaSautu_WEB.pdf.

4. Health Quality & Safety Commission, *Bula Sautu*, 9-10; Alice Te Punga Somerville, *Once were Pacific: Māori connections to Oceania* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xxii.

5. Cluny Macpherson, Melani Ane, and Paul Spoonley, *Evolving identities of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 2001), np; Alice Te Punga Somerville, *Once were Pacific: Māori connections to Oceania* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), xxii. Augie Fleras and Paul Spoonley, *Recalling Aotearoa: Indigenous politics and ethnic relations in New Zealand* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), np.

6. Paul Spoonley, *Racism and Ethnicity: Critical Issues in New Zealand Society* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1988), np; Jacinda Ardern and Aupito William Sio, "Government offers formal apology for Dawn Raids," August 1, 2021, <https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-offers-formal-apology-dawn-raids>.

7. Ardern and Sio, "Government offers formal apology for Dawn Raids."

8. Ministry for Pacific Peoples, "Teu Le Va - Dawn Raids History Community Fund Round One," accessed January 31, 2023, <https://www.mpp.govt.nz/funding/dawn-raids-history-community-fund/>.

9. Ministry for Culture and Heritage, "New Zealand in the Pacific," January 13, 2016, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/capture-of-samoa/background/>; Marcia Leenen-Young and Serena Naepi, "Gathering Pandanus Leaves: Colonization, internationalization and the Pacific," *Journal of International Students*, 11 no. S1 (2021): 17.

10. Scott Hamilton, *The Stolen Island: Searching for 'Ata* (New Zealand: Bridget Williams Books, 2016), 40-43; Sally Blundell, "Blackbirding: New Zealand's shameful role in the Pacific Islands slave trade," *Stuff*, December 2, 2018, <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/noted/listener/108992096/blackbirding-new-zealands-shameful-role-in-the-pacific-islands-slave-trade>; Jamie Tahana, "How NZ took influenza to Samoa, killing a fifth of its population," *Radio New Zealand*, October 7, 2018, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/375404/how-nz-took-influenza-to-samoa-killing-a-fifth-of-its-population>. See also: Sandra M. Tomkins, "The influenza epidemic of 1918-19 in Western Samoa," *The Journal of Pacific History* 27, no. 2 (1992): 185; Ministry for Culture and Heritage, "New Zealand in Samoa," April 30, 2020, <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/samoa/>; The Coconet TV, "Untold Pacific History: Episode 2 - Niue / The Murder of Commissioner Larsen," June 2, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-gE1tyePv0>.

11. Leenen-Young and Naepi, "Gathering Pandanus Leaves," 18-22.

12. Leenen-Young and Naepi, "Gathering Pandanus Leaves," 18-22.

13. Sean Mallon, Kolokesa Māhina-Tuai, and Damon Salea, *Tangata o Le Moana: New Zealand and the People of the Pacific*, (Wellington, NZ: Te Papa Press, 2012), np.

14. Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group." It should be noted that the 2018 census had a poor response rate, particularly for Pacific peoples (65% compared to 83% of the total population) which resulted in data being pulled from New Zealand's Integrated Data System raising concerns about data sovereignty.

15. Stats NZ, "New Zealand," Stats NZ, 2020a, <https://www.stats.govt.nz/tools/2018-census-place-summaries/new-zealand/>; Stats NZ, "Pacific peoples ethnic group."

16. Ministry for Pacific Peoples, *Pacific Aotearoa status report: A snapshot 2020*, October 2021, 18, <https://www.mpp.govt.nz/assets/Reports/Pacific-Peoples-in-Aotearoa-Report.pdf>.

17. Ministry for Pacific Peoples, *Pacific Aotearoa*, 19.

Pacific peoples and museums

Pacific peoples and museums have a tense history. Many of the Pacific taonga in museums today were collected during the colonial era, and often the communities and people who are the cultural custodians of the taonga have little access to these material cultural heritage items.¹⁸ Much of the global Pacific collections remain unseen by the public.¹⁹ This review of the literature traces Pacific peoples' relationships with museums historically, presently, internationally, and, in particular, with the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa. A significant point of note is that much of the literature that refers to Oceania often relies heavily on Māori and Aboriginal Australian experiences of museums and that there is a lack of Pacific voices even within literature meant to be inclusive of Pacific peoples.

Museums initially engaged with Pacific peoples as part of a wider racist and colonial agenda

The relationship between Pacific peoples and museums began as part of the wider racist and colonial project.²⁰ Pacific peoples and their taonga were collected as curiosities for museums, zoos, and personal collections.²¹ For individuals, the collection of Pacific taonga increased their status as well-travelled and knowledgeable.²² In contrast, museum collections contributed to wider social and scientific discussions of Pacific peoples as 'the missing link' or 'Native Savages'.²³ Pacific taonga were collected and classified according to the collectors' worldviews²⁴ and Pacific artefacts were static, classified and presented in ways that saw Pacific peoples as unchanging.²⁵ Many of these collections were also inaccessible to Pacific peoples themselves.²⁶ This overall social view resulted in museum and personal collections where Pacific peoples were exoticised and misrepresented.²⁷

Unfortunately, the different trends of interest in Pacific taonga mean that extensive collections would often be disbanded and distributed worldwide – for instance, the Pacific collection in Levers Museum, London, initially held pride of place but was later sold and moved to other museums. This process saw labels and classification descriptions misplaced, obfuscating which parts of the Pacific they were collected from.²⁸ Similarly, New Zealand's Colonial Museum (now Te Papa) kept no register of Pacific artefacts under its first director, James Hector.²⁹ Examples such as the Levers Museum show that while Pacific collections have been important to the establishment of museums, once Pacific collections are out of vogue, museums have not cared for the taonga. Instead, they have spread them across institutions and places without caring to record where these taonga were from and which communities they were connected to. The treatment of Pacific artefacts under the Colonial Museum shows how different leadership can value Pacific taonga and communities differently, impacting how well cared for and recorded Pacific taonga are.

18. Tristen Jones, Hilary Howes, and Matthew Spriggs, "Conclusion: Highlights from the Uncovering Pacific Pasts exhibition," in *Uncovering Pacific Pasts: Histories of Archaeology in Oceania*, eds. Hilary Howes, Tristen Jones, and Matthew Spriggs (ANU Press, 2022), 548.

19. Anna Edmundson, "Searching for origins: Archaeology and the government officers of Papua," in *Uncovering Pacific Pasts: Histories of Archaeology in Oceania*, eds. Hilary Howes, Tristen Jones, and Matthew Spriggs (ANU Press, 2022), 325.

20. Richard Wolfe, "Oceania in the Museum: Changing Representations of Pacific Collections," PhD diss., University of Auckland, 2018.

21. Kolokesa Uafa Mahina-Tu'ai, "Intangible heritage: a Pacific case study at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* 1 (2006): 13-24; Amiria Henare, *Museums, anthropology and imperial exchange*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 50.

22. Māhina-Tu'ai, *Intangible heritage*, 14; Edmundson, *Searching for origins*, 328.

23. Maile Renee Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians: The science of settler colonial whiteness in Hawaii and Oceania*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), np; Emille Dotte-Sarout, "1800: How the 'South Seas savages' became 'antique monuments'," in *Uncovering Pacific Pasts: Histories of Archaeology in Oceania* eds. Hilary Howes, Tristen Jones and Matthew Spriggs (ANU Press, 2022), np; Henare, *Museums, anthropology and imperial exchange*, 50; Jim Specht and Lissant Bolton, "Pacific islands' artefact collections: the UNESCO inventory project," *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 17 (2005): 63; Wolfe, "Oceania in the Museum", np; Angela Saini, *Superior: the return of race science*, (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2019), np.

24. Grace Hutton, Safua Akeli, and Sean Mallon, "Rediscovering the collection: Cook Islands material culture in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 21 (2010): 99; Māhina-Tu'ai, *Intangible heritage*, 16; Arvin, *Possessing Polynesians*, np.

25. Sean Mallon, "Against tradition," *The Contemporary Pacific* (2010), 372; Māhina-Tu'ai, *Intangible heritage*, 23.

26. Specht and Bolton, "Pacific islands' artefact collections: the UNESCO inventory project," 58.

27. Māhina-Tu'ai, *Intangible heritage*, 16.

28. Henare, *Museums, anthropology and imperial exchange*, 43-44.

29. Janet Davidson, "Pacific collections: the National Museum of New Zealand/Te Whare Taonga o Aotearoa," *Pacific Arts* (1991): 9.

Museums now support the broader critique of this period.³⁰ For instance, the *Uncovering Pacific Pasts* exhibition brought together 30 museums and cultural institutions to reflect on their legacies in the Pacific.³¹ Museums are increasingly aware that their Pacific collections provide an opportunity for Pacific peoples to reconnect with taonga and renew collective social memories of Pacific heritage.³² Te Papa's approach to collections is also an example of how collection practices have changed. Te Papa's collection practice is grounded in the Māori concept of kaitiaki, enabling Te Papa to recognise the Māori concepts of mauri and mana taonga.³³ These concepts ensure that Te Papa does not continue to act as traditional museums do. Instead, it builds and maintains its collections with iwi and other communities by ensuring that iwi and community have a say in how their taonga are cared for and displayed.³⁴ This recognition by museums of the effects of historical choices in collection practices, changes in collection practices, and the raising of Pacific voices is enabling a change in how museums engage with Pacific peoples, communities, and taonga. While there are a number of wide-ranging Pacific projects in museums nationally and globally, this report focusses on Te Papa's work as the National Museum of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa and Pacific peoples

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992 lays out the obligations of Te Papa. This legislation includes a mandate to represent the heritages and communities of Aotearoa New Zealand. Section eight of the Act outlines that the board will:

- (a) Have regard to the ethnic and cultural diversity of the people of New Zealand and to the contributions they have made and continue to make to New Zealand's cultural life and the fabric of New Zealand society;
- (b) Endeavour to ensure both that the Museum expresses and recognises the mana and significance of Māori, European, and other major traditions and cultural heritages, and provide the means to contribute effectively to the Museum as a statement of New Zealand's identity;
- (c) endeavour to ensure that the Museum is a source of pride for all New Zealanders.³⁵

This important statutory obligation of representing diverse communities and their contribution to Aotearoa New Zealand has provided a platform from which to include Pacific peoples in the fabric of Te Papa and the story that it tells of Aotearoa New Zealand.

30. John Giblin, Imma Ramos, and Nikki Grout. "Dismantling the master's house: thoughts on representing empire and decolonising museums and public spaces in practice an introduction." *Third Text* 33, no. 4-5 (2019): 471.

31. Jones, Howes, and Spriggs, Conclusion, 545; Jane Pickering and Maile Arvin, "The Polynesian Problem": Western Studies of Pacific Islander Origin, Video, Harvard University, the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnography, March 17, 2021, <https://peabody.harvard.edu/video-%E2%80%9C-polynesian-problem%E2%80%9D-western-studies-pacific-islander-origins>.

32. Safua Akeli and Shane Pasene, "Exploring 'the Rock': Material culture from Niue Island in Te Papa's Pacific Cultures collection," *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 22 (2011): 118; Roy MacLeod, "Postcolonialism and museum knowledge: revisiting the museums of the Pacific," *Pacific Science* 52, no. 4 (1998): 310; Māhina-Tu'ai, *Intangible heritage*, 16; Jones, Howes, and Spriggs, Conclusion, 552.

33. Huhana Smith, "The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," In *South Pacific museums: Experiments in culture*, eds. Chris Healy and Andrea Witcomb (Monash University ePress, 2006), 10.1.

34. Smith, *The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa*, 10.1.

35. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa Act 1992, part. 8.

The treatment of Pacific taonga by Te Papa has shifted over time

The displaying of Pacific taonga has shifted over time in Te Papa. Changes in commitments, interests, and political relationships have meant that its Pacific collection is fragmented.³⁶ Prior to becoming Te Papa, the Colonial Museum (1865-1907), Dominion Museum (1907-1972), and the National Museum (1972-1992) kept their Pacific taonga as part of the Foreign Ethnology collection.³⁷ The early collection was mainly donated, so there is little information on artists and communities connected with this Pacific taonga and uneven coverage of areas of the Pacific.³⁸

The initial Pacific community consultation in establishing Te Papa made clear that Pacific peoples wished to see a move away from framing Pacific peoples and taonga as ‘traditional’ and stuck³⁹ in time. Rather, there was a desire to have more nuanced displays that include cultural representations of contemporary, transnational Pacific peoples and the different taonga connection to people, geography, and locality.⁴⁰

Te Papa’s initial opening Pacific exhibition, *Mana Pasifika*, focussed on Pacific peoples’ cultural survival in New Zealand and was divided into ethnographic categories such as ceremonies, religion, music, and warfare.⁴¹ In 2007, *Tangata o le Moana*, a permanent Pacific exhibition, was opened. Over 20,000 Pacific people attended the three-day festival to celebrate its opening.⁴² At the time, *Tangata o le Moana* was described as a “new permanent exhibition on the relationships between New Zealand and the Pacific”.⁴³ Sean Mallon, curator of Pacific histories at Te Papa, reflects that this exhibition fundamentally shifted how Te Papa thinks about their display of Pacific cultures and histories.⁴⁴ In a divergence from *Mana Pasifika*, Pacific curators intentionally ensured that this exhibit would explore and acknowledge the contemporary contribution of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand today.⁴⁵ The featuring of Pacific curatorial staff in recent international writing on co-curating and co-collecting indicates that Te Papa and its Pacific team are leaders in changing how museums think about working with taonga and communities.⁴⁶

Today, Te Papa’s collection houses 13,000 items in the Pacific Collections. The collection is both historical and contemporary and includes items from across the Pacific region while increasingly focussing on Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand.⁴⁷ Te Papa has also hosted temporary Pacific exhibitions such as *Pacific Sisters*, *Mau: House of Night and Day* and *Tatau*. Their public programmes celebrate the different Pacific language weeks, and Pacific artists have been featured in *Celebrating Makers*, such as Akomai Heritage ngatu-making workshops. The Pacific collections and featuring of Pacific artists and communities are part of Te Papa’s commitments to Pacific peoples in action.

36. Hutton, Grace, Safua Akeli, and Sean Mallon. “Rediscovering the collection: Cook Islands material culture in the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.” *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa* 21 (2010): 99-123.

37. Hutton, Akeli, and Mallon, *Rediscovering the collection*, 99.

38. Janet Davidson, *Pacific collections*, 9.

39. Sean Mallon, “Against tradition”, 370.

40. Kolokesa Uafā Māhina-Tuaiti, “The Mis-Education of Moana Arts,” *Pacific Arts* 14, no. 1/2 (2015): np; Sean Mallon, “Against tradition”, 371.

41. Stephanie Gibson and Sean Mallon, “Representing community exhibitions at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa,” *Tuhinga: Records of the Museum of Te Papa Tongarewa* 21 (2010): 51.

42. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Annual Report 2007/08 Te Pūrangō ā-Tau 2007/08* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2008), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/annual_report_2007-08.pdf, 5.

43. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Annual Report 2007/08 Te Pūrangō ā-Tau 2007/08*, 6.

44. Sean Mallon, “Against tradition”, 365.

45. Gibson and Mallon, *Representing community exhibitions*, 52.

46. Sean Mallon, “Agency and authority: The politics of co-collecting,” In *Curatopia*, eds. Philipp Schorch and Conal McCarthy (Manchester University Press, 2018), np.

47. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Pacific cultures at Te Papa n.d* <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/1330>

Te Papa has made commitments to Pacific peoples

Commitments to Pacific peoples have changed over time for Te Papa. These have included increasing and tracking Pacific visitation rates,⁴⁸ being the kaitiaki of choice for Pacific materials,⁴⁹ developing Pacific-specific exhibitions,⁵⁰ serving the wider Pacific region,⁵¹ training staff on Pacific issues,⁵² increasing Pacific scholarship,⁵³ and raising awareness and recognition of Pacific taonga.⁵⁴ The motivations for these commitments have also evolved and vary, including demographic shifts,⁵⁵ positioning Aotearoa New Zealand as a Pacific nation,⁵⁶ showcasing Pacific connections to Aotearoa New Zealand,⁵⁷ and increasing Pacific peoples' support and involvement in Te Papa.⁵⁸

Te Papa's Statement of Intent 2020-2024 outlines current commitments to Pacific peoples.⁵⁹ Moving forward, Te Papa aims to build its foundations as a leading research generator and interpreter of Pacific collections,⁶⁰ including renewing their New Zealand and Pacific history and society exhibitions.⁶¹ This practice is crucial in increasing their focus on mana taonga practices with community collaboration and understanding Pacific audiences within Aotearoa New Zealand. Te Papa also wishes to extend its reach into the Pacific region by establishing digital platforms and further digitising collections.⁶²

While there have been interesting and significant commitments to Pacific peoples through the years, Te Papa's ongoing shifts in and motivations for its commitments signify that, like previous collection and showcasing patterns, Pacific peoples continue to be a trend that can be discarded or heavily invested in depending on current leadership and political and social willingness. Additionally, many acquired Pacific taonga are not attributed to specific people or villages. This erasure of makers and communities continues to diminish the nuance and connection of Pacific peoples. As such, if Te Papa is truly to be kaitiaki of Pacific taonga, it must consider how its acquisitions process and strategic goals can be both embedded beyond what is in vogue at that moment and reflective of the communities and whenua that taonga belongs to.

Pacific audiences and museums

Serving more diverse communities, such as Pacific peoples, is an ongoing responsibility for Te Papa.⁶³ While there has been a marked increase in Pacific visitors, the challenge of being a national museum tasked with reaching a Pacific population, of which a majority live in Tāmaki Makaurau, will continue to be a priority for Te Papa.⁶⁴ In a 2011 study, Davidson and Sibley found that one third of Pacific visitors were visiting as part of a family group and were more likely to visit as part of an educational visit than other groups (excluding Māori).⁶⁵ Critically, research into visitation rates at Te Papa has noted the importance of undertaking future research specific to Pacific communities to build an understanding of how they utilise and understand the museum.⁶⁶ Below, we explore Te Papa's internal survey data in relation to Pacific audiences.

48. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2007), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/statement_of_intent_2007-08-2009-10.pdf, 3.
 49. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2002), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/statement_of_intent_2002-03_2003-04_2004-05.pdf, 20; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2008), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/statement_of_intent_2008-09_2009-10_2010-11.pdf, 4.
 50. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11*, 26; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2005/06, 2006/07, 2008/09* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2005), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/statement_of_intent_2005-06_2006-07_2008-09.pdf, 11; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05*, 28.
 51. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2001/02, 2002/03, 2003/04* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2001), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/statement_of_intent_2001-02_2002-03_2003-04.pdf, 22; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05*, 21; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11*, 19.
 52. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Annual Report 2006-2007* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2006), https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/annual_report_2006-07.pdf, 12.
 53. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11*, 18.
 54. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11*, 18.
 55. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10*, 40.
 56. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2007/08, 2008/09, 2009/10*, 12; Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11*, 6.
 57. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2002/03, 2003/04, 2004/05*, 28.
 58. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11*, 20.
 59. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2020-24* (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 2020), <https://www.tepapa.govt.nz/sites/default/files/statement-of-intent-2020-24.pdf>, np.
 60. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2020-24*, 13.
 61. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2020-24*, 15.
 62. Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, *Statement of intent 2020-24*, 17.
 63. Lee Davidson and Pamela Sibley, "Audiences at the "new" museum: Visitor commitment, diversity, and leisure at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa," *Visitor Studies* 14, no. 2 (2011): 186.
 64. Davidson and Sibley, "Audiences at the "new" museum," 186.
 65. Davidson and Sibley, "Audiences at the "new" museum," 186.
 66. Davidson and Sibley, "Audiences at the "new" museum," 187.

Te Papa regularly conducts audience surveys to collect data and information about its visitors. The Visitor Profile Interview (VPI) is a self-completed survey that covers visitors' demographics, motivations, behaviour, and satisfaction. Only visitors who are 15 or above are invited to participate in the survey. Te Papa has been collecting visitor information since its opening in 1998. On average, more than 3200 surveys are collected every year.

Pacific visitors at Te Papa approximately account for 5% of the domestic audience. This data is likely to under-represent the actual number of Pacific visitors at Te Papa. This is in part due to possible sampling error and in part due to inconsistencies in the survey question regarding the ethnicity of visitors. The majority of Pacific visitors at Te Papa are local – from Wellington City and the broad Wellington region.

The social aspect of the museum experience is very important for Pacific audiences. Data collected between July 2017 and February 2023 show that Pacific visitors are the most likely to visit Te Papa in large groups. Pacific visitors commonly visit the museum with family members and friends. The average number of people in the group is 4.4 for Pacific visitors, higher than Māori (3.7) and Pākehā (3.0) visitors. Also, compared to Māori and Pākehā visitors, Pacific audiences at Te Papa tend to be younger: over 60% of the Pacific visitors interviewed between July 2017 and February 2023 were in the 15-24- or 25-34-year old groups.

Pacific peoples who currently use Te Papa digital space are generally satisfied

Te Papa's audience surveys reveal that approximately 9% of online collection visitors are Pacific, and overall, Pacific peoples express high satisfaction with their experience using Te Papa's collections. The mean rating was 7.9/10, with a median of 8/10. A majority of participants (76%) stated that they were able to fulfil the purpose of their visit, suggesting that Te Papa's online collections serve as an effective resource for personal (40%), educational (18%), and creative project (12%) research. Positive feedback was provided regarding the user-friendly design, quick navigation options, abundance of artefacts and images, detailed descriptions, and free content availability. On the other hand, 24% reported being unable to fulfil the purpose of their visit due to various reasons, such as difficulty in finding or accessing information or lack of clarity about specific topics or items of interest.

Pacific peoples who use Te Papa's website have a positive experience with the online space. The Te Papa website is highly regarded and appreciated for its accessibility, content, authenticity, and educational value by Pacific peoples. Most users had a satisfactory experience navigating through the platform and were pleased with the amount of information they were able to uncover about cultural celebrations and traditions, museum events and exhibits, education and the exploration of personal heritage and genealogy. However, some areas left room for improvement, including difficulties finding particular pieces of information or being unable to fully explore due to time constraints. Additionally, those outside Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington or Aotearoa New Zealand encountered geographical limitations when using the site, preventing them from accessing the entirety of its features. Lastly, a few participants reported having specific enquiries that went unanswered.

Moving forward with Pacific peoples and Te Papa

Te Papa's commitment to Pacific peoples means that flexibility and innovation will be crucial to building and strengthening meaningful relationships with Pacific peoples moving forward. Previous writing has identified that co-collecting, co-creating, and digital platforms may provide a way forward for Te Papa and Pacific peoples.

Co-collecting and co-creating have been put into practice recently by Te Papa. Initially, this was indicated to be a promising practice for Te Papa moving forward by Māhina-Tuai, who was inspired by the Vanuatu Cultural Centres' use of volunteer community fieldworkers to build their collection and connection with the community.⁶⁷ Co-collecting was taken up by Te Papa in 2016, and has continued into today as a means to work with Pacific communities to create exhibitions and collections.⁶⁸

The 2008 digitisation of the Pacific collection was seen as a significant step forward for the Pacific community and accessibility to the Pacific collection.⁶⁹ The National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga and the National Library of Australia's Virtual Museum of the Pacific exemplify devolving power to the community.⁷⁰ The Virtual Museum of the Pacific was intentionally designed to enable communities to create their annotations on taonga. When a key part of the Virtual Museum of the Pacific (<https://digitalpasifik.org/>) was launched, Tim Kong, programme manager, noted that:

*At the heart of this pilot is a conversation about supporting Pacific Island peoples to connect with items of cultural heritage they don't know exist and to support them in redefining and shaping their own stories as a result of seeing and being able to engage with this cultural heritage.*⁷¹

Te Papa's collections are available through the Digital Pasifik website, which provides an opportunity to consider how their collections are presented online and how the community can engage with and share stories of the Te Papa collection. In addition, Te Papa's Hīnāture Digital Learning Lab has been identified as a potential space for developing Pacific peoples' connections to Te Papa through digital storytelling that considers the broader contexts of Te Papa's Pacific taonga.⁷² Pacific curatorial blogs are also an opportunity to engage with Pacific peoples in the digital space and provide stories behind Pacific taonga.⁷³

Te Papa has pre-existing digital practices that could be expanded in use and audience to encourage Pacific peoples' engagement with Te Papa. However, previous research has highlighted concerns that the digital divide will affect access to museum collections for Pacific peoples⁷⁴ as Pacific peoples have lower internet access, use periods, and levels of training in digital tools.⁷⁵ A more recent study found that one in five Pacific peoples between the age of 16-65 used some technology but have no computer experience, have not passed a simple computer-use assessment, or they decline to use a computer.⁷⁶ Any move to expand reliance on digital services must consider the Pacific digital divide.

67. Māhina-Tuai, *Intangible heritage*, 17.

68. Philipp Schorch with Nina Tonga and Sean Mallon, "Materializing German-Samoan Colonial Legacies," in *Refocusing ethnographic museums through oceanic lenses*, ed. Philipp Schorch (Hawaii, USA: University of Hawaii Press, 2020), np; Sean Mallon, "Artists' hands: messages from Chamorro artists of Guåhan," *Te Papa Blog*, June 8, 2016, <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2016/06/08/artists-hands-messages-from-chamorro-artists-of-guahan/>; Nina Tonga, "Countering stereotypes through co-collecting with Tongan youth," *Te Papa Blog*, June 16, 2017, <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2017/06/16/countering-stereotypes-through-co-collecting-with-tongan-youth/>;

Claire Regnault, "Collecting the spirit of Hawai'i through aloha shirts," *Te Papa Blog*, December 12, 2017, <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2017/12/12/collecting-the-spirit-of-hawaii-through-alo-ha-shirts/>; Nina Tonga, "Revisiting the Tongan co-collecting stories of Project 83: Small Things Matter – Elisapeta Fononga," *Te Papa Blog*, September 2, 2020, <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2020/09/02/revisiting-the-stories-of-project-83-small-things-matter-elisapeta-fononga/>; Rachel Yates, "Co-collecting climate change in Tokelau: Project IKA," *Te Papa Blog*, May 3, 2021, <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2021/05/03/co-collecting-climate-change-in-tokelau-project-ika/>.

69. Hutton, Akeli, and Mallon, "Rediscovering the collection", 121.

70. Krishnabhakti-Vasilakis, Friederike, "The virtual museum of the Pacific: new context, new knowledge, new art," Paper presentation, The Australian Council of University Art and Design Schools Conference, Tasmania, September 1-3, 2010, <https://ro.uow.edu.au/creartspapers/444/>.

71. Libraries Aotearoa, "Collaboration Brings Results for Pacific Cultural Heritage," *Libraries Aotearoa*, accessed January 31, 2023, <https://www.librariesaotearoa.org.nz/collaboration-brings-results-for-pacific-cultural-heritage.html>.

72. David Raymond Bell and Jeffrey K. Smith, "Inside the digital learning laboratory: new directions in museum education," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 63, no. 3 (2020): 384.

73. See: <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/category/pacific/>.

74. Singh, Supriya, and Meredith Blake, "The digitization of Pacific cultural collections: Consulting with Pacific diasporic communities and museum experts," *Curator: The Museum Journal* 55, no. 1 (2012): np.

75. John Gibson, "The digital divide in New Zealand: The position of Maori and Pacific peoples," *He Puna Korero: Journal of Maori and Pacific Development* 3, no. 2 (2002): 93.

76. Digital Government, "Report: Digital inclusion user insights – Pacific peoples Digital Government", February 8, 2022, <https://www.digital.govt.nz/dmsdocument/179-report-digital-inclusion-user-insights-pacific-peoples/html#foreword>.



Nina Tonga, Curator Pacific Art, delivers a Pacific Collection Store Tour, 2019. Photo by Amanda Rogers. Te Papa

Summary of the literature

There is a significant body of work on how museums engage with and present Pacific histories and taonga, but there remains little work for Pacific audiences. This literature review has provided a holistic consideration of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, Pacific peoples and museums, and, specifically, Pacific peoples and Te Papa. This holistic understanding provides an essential backdrop for understanding the following collective knowledge. In short, this extensive literature review provides us with the necessary historical and contemporary knowledge to consider the words and responses of our Collaborators in ways that will support meaningful change.

This research report serves to close this gap in the literature and provide Te Papa with insight into how Pacific peoples access and consume museum content with a particular focus on their perceptions, interests, motivations, satisfaction, aspirations, and needs.



Opening Evening, 8 Nov 2019. Photo by Jo Moore. Te Papa.

Research Methods

At the core of our Matada is a commitment to valuing relationships, respect, reciprocity and service. These values have enabled us to uncover invaluable insights which can be used significantly when shaping policy and practice.



Pacific Store tour, 2015. Photo by Michael Hall. Te Papa

Pacific Methodology

As a project focusing on Pacific communities, it was essential to use Pacific research methodologies that centre Pacific peoples and our own ways of knowing.⁷⁷ Pacific research methodologies form the basis for this knowledge-building process. Our three guiding principles were; respect relationality and reciprocity This approach included the participation of our Pacific Ethics Board, which ensured the inclusion of community voices throughout design, implementation and reporting.

Our Team

Our commitment to intersectional analysis, broad representation, and capacity and capability building for Pacific research means that our Matada Research team is a mixture of Pacific ethnicities, including people from Niue, Samoa, and Fiji. We are from a diverse age range and gender identities. Our research skill levels vary from emerging researcher to established researcher as part of our commitment to growing Pacific research excellence.

Method

This mixed-method study used both survey and talanoa to explore Pacific peoples' perceptions, interests, motivations, satisfaction, aspirations, and needs regarding physical and digital museum spaces.

Finding our Collaborators

With relationality as a guiding principle, our Collaborators/ participants were found through personal relationships and ongoing snowball sampling – Collaborators helped to find new Collaborators through their own relationships. This approach enabled meaningful sharing between Collaborators and the Matada research team.

77. Sereana, Naepi, "Pacific research methodologies." In *Oxford research encyclopedia of education*. (Oxford University Press, 2019). np

Survey

For this research, we used an online self-administered survey not only to quantify certain aspects of our research but also to obtain a larger data set for a more comprehensive understanding of how Pacific peoples engage with museums. The initial survey responses were also crucial for guiding the following talanoa sessions.

The survey design and formulation of questions were informed by a collaborative approach with Te Papa which allowed us to create a ten-minute survey with up to 15 questions throughout, depending on the responses to (previous) questions. The survey was structured to measure Pacific peoples' interests, visit frequency, online museum use, Te Papa visitations, and collection interest.

In order to gather data from Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific region, and other underrepresented populations from Melanesia, we leveraged both personal and professional networks as well as social media marketing and online advertising. Survey response collection occurred between September 18 to December 5, 2022.

Demographics

Mapping the engagement of Pacific peoples with museums was the survey's focus, and an opportunity to gain valuable insight into how they interact with museum spaces. Our research was conducted at a national, regional, and international level across Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific region (Samoa, Tonga, Niue, Cook Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, Kiribati) and Melanesia (West Papua, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia). No restrictions were placed on gender or occupation in order to capture the full breadth of responses. However, we did restrict the age requirement to 18-year-olds or over to abide by legal requirements for parental and/or guardian consent.

Survey demographics:

- **Responses:** 229
- **Age:** 18 to over 65
- **Occupation:** Professionals, Managers, Students, Technicians & trade workers, Community & personal services workers, Clerical & administrative workers, Sales workers, Machinery operators & drivers, Labourers
- **Ethnic identity:** Cook Islands, Fijian, Niuean, Kiribati, New Caledonian, Papua New Guinea, Rotuman, Samoan, Solomon Islands, Tahitian, Tokelauan, Tongan, Tuvaluan & West Papuan

Talanoa

Talanoa is an established Pacific research method that enables Pacific community members to share openly and authentically. Talanoa is a form of narrative enquiry developed from Pacific peoples' oratory traditions:

*which affords value to, for example, kinship, land, tradition/custom, relationships, ancestors, ceremony, cosmology, space, language, ethics, the chiefly system, systems of faith, and protocols. Talanoa encompasses behaviours/manners such as openness, patience, tolerance, flexibility, silence, humility, generosity, gifting, reciprocity, humour, empowerment, listening, sharing, forgiveness, and subjectivity.*⁷⁸

The 25 talanoa for this project were conducted one-on-one, both in person and online (dependent on participant preference). The talanoa aimed to explore Collaborators' experiences and perceptions of museums, Te Papa, and online museum spaces. Using talanoa in this project created an opportunity for deep sharing. For instance, in talanoa two, the participant cried as they spoke about museums' abilities to connect us with our past and ancestors. It was not uncommon for the talanoa to include laughter, particularly when discussing children's attention spans and trying to locate affordable entertainment during a cost-of-living crisis. Talanoa as an approach also meant there was space to talk about the spiritual aspects of museums, namely what it means to have ancestral taonga behind glass cases and how the museum operates as a bure to store these spiritual connections.

Demographics

The talanoa aimed to gain a deeper comprehension of the experiences, values, and outlooks of Pacific peoples with children living in Aotearoa New Zealand aged between 18 and 65+, as it was widely recognised that people in this demographic are more likely to visit local museums than their international counterparts. This focus gave us a greater insight into this group's motivations, desires, and aspirations, which is crucial for ensuring effective and meaningful engagement with museum collections.

Talanoa demographics:

Participants: 25

Age: 19 to 63

Occupation: Professionals, Managers, Students, Sales worker, Unemployed

Ethnic identity: Cook Islands, Fijian, Niuean, Samoan, Tokelauan, Tongan, Tahitian

Collective Knowledge Building

This project recognises the importance of collective knowledge building in Pacific spaces. As such, we have a team of Pacific researchers who have conducted interviews, considered survey data, themed talanoa, and discussed literature. This talanoa within the research team creates opportunities for layered understandings and the opportunity to check in with each other on understandings and interpretation of the data.

For the talanoa, the transcripts were analysed by three team members, including the research lead. Overall, themes were identified through consensus, and each talanoa was considered in detail to identify instances where dialogue was shared on those themes. This process ensures reliability through peer assessment and that our three guiding principles (relationality, respect, reciprocity) are present in our methodology.

For the survey, the research lead worked with a statistician to ask different questions about the data and offer layered understanding. This information was then shared with our core research team to discuss as a collective.



Key Findings

"Where to start... I love being able to walk into a museum and get lost in all that is there to see or experience, whether it is a small art gallery or a big museum"





Te Taiao Nature, 2019. Photo by Maarten Holl. Te Papa.

Survey

Data was collected based on museums interest, visiting frequency, access to online museums, Te Papa visits and collection / activity interest.

Survey Analysis

The survey collected data on interest in museums, visiting frequency, access to online museums, Te Papa visits, and collection/activity interest. To effectively report the survey responses, the data was collated and synthesised into three categories of museum users based on their museum visits in the last three years: low (0 visits), moderate (1 to 3), and high users (4 or more). Dependent on the Collaborators selection of low, moderate, or high this would pathway the Collaborator to a different set of questions in the survey that reflected a desire to know more about their motivations behind their visitation rates.

Low users demonstrated a strong interest in museum collections, especially Pacific exhibits and events. However, they cited a lack of awareness about museum offerings and transportation difficulties as reasons for not visiting. Moderate users primarily visited Auckland Museum and Te Papa, and, like low users, cited a lack of awareness and transportation difficulties. High users were very interested in visiting museums, with Te Papa being their most visited destination (Infographic). They also had greater knowledge about museum offerings, including online resources. All groups expressed a high level of interest in Pacific collections and exhibits. The following is an analysis of the collected survey data.

Interest in museums

This section explores the different survey responses regarding Pacific peoples' interest in museums. Depending on their survey answers, the respondents were grouped into two categories based on their level of interest: extremely-interested and very-interested, or somewhat-interested, not-so-interested, and not-interested. Overall, the survey results showed that Pacific peoples are highly interested in museums, with 70% of respondents falling into the extremely-interested or very-interested categories. In contrast, only 26% of respondents were in the somewhat-interested, not-so-interested categories, with a very small percentage (3%) indicating that they were not interested at all. (Figure 1)

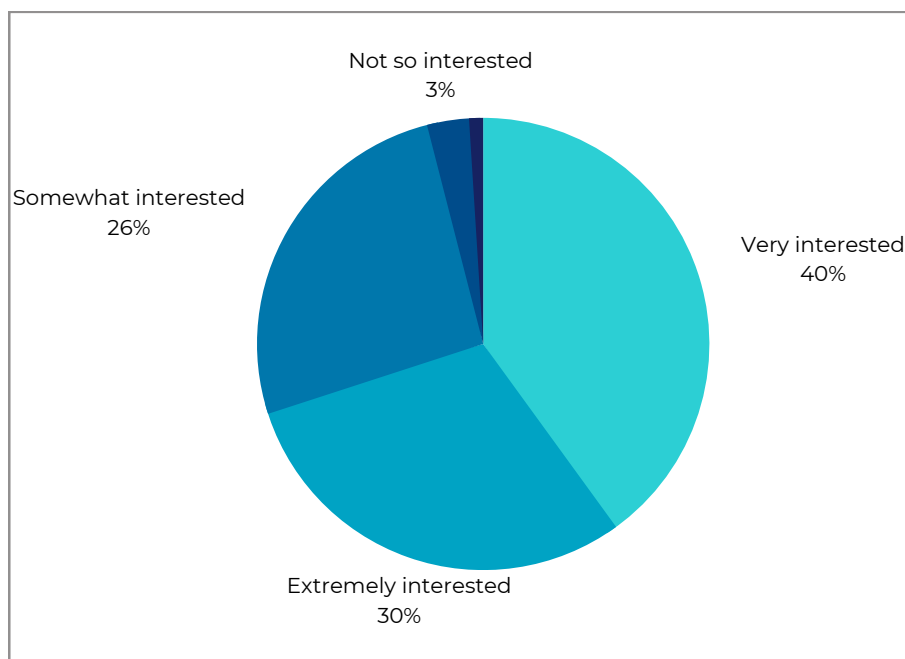


Figure 1: Break down of interest levels of survey respondents into extremely interested, very interested, somewhat interested, not so interested and not interested (n=229)

Extremely-interested and very-interested cohort

"Where to start... I love being able to walk into a museum and get lost in all that is there to see or experience, whether it is a small art gallery or a big museum"

When asked an open-ended question about what they found most interesting about museums, the extremely-interested and very-interested cohort described opportunities to:

Learn about history and culture

"Learning about history, seeing objects and artefacts, feeling that sense of antiquity when looking at something, realising that we are so transient as individuals but part of a greater whole. I particularly love the more intimate everyday objects and being able to relate to how someone undertook an activity that I do 100 years ago – 1000 years ago – the humanity of it."

Understand how people in the past lived

“The collection of artefacts that can capture cultures long since gone. They tell us the stories of how they lived and their relationship with each other. It’s also interesting to view how others see the cultures that I am from.”

Appreciate artwork and artefacts

“History stories and artefacts of the past, especially Pasifika.”

Connect with ancestors and their stories

“Learning new things... being able to connect with things from my own Pacific culture that I don’t have access to in New Zealand, or to connect with things relating to practices that no longer take place (until revitalised).”

Be inspired to be creative

“Enjoying learning about our NZ and Pacific History and being inspired by the artworks.”

Explore different cultures

“It’s a unique place to visit because it reminds me of history, present and future of a particular objects which represent lots of different things such as culture, traditions etc.”

Learn new things

“I enjoy it when there are new things on, and I can learn more about another part of human history. I take my children often and they enjoy the interactive parts.”

The most interesting factors of museums for extremely-interested and very-interested cohort

Overall, the extremely interested and very interested cohort placed emphasis on capturing the stories of our past through the taonga that are housed in museums. However, they also noted that it was essential to display Pacific taonga respectfully in ways that do not uphold colonisation. Importantly, this cohort recognised that museums are invaluable for discovering new information, connecting with our roots, and celebrating our Pacific heritage. Additionally, this cohort had high levels of engagement with museums, with 60% visiting four or more times in the last three years. In contrast, 32% visited museums 1 to 3 times in the last three years, categorising them as moderate-level users (Infographic). These high and medium levels of engagement are positive as it reflects that the extremely-interested and very-interested cohort is not only interested in museums but also engaging with museums.

“I love looking at relics of the past, as well as pieces and events that have shaped the current moment and social environment. I think particularly with Pacific peoples in NZ. I find it interesting looking at relics/memorabilia that have shaped our current experience in NZ.”

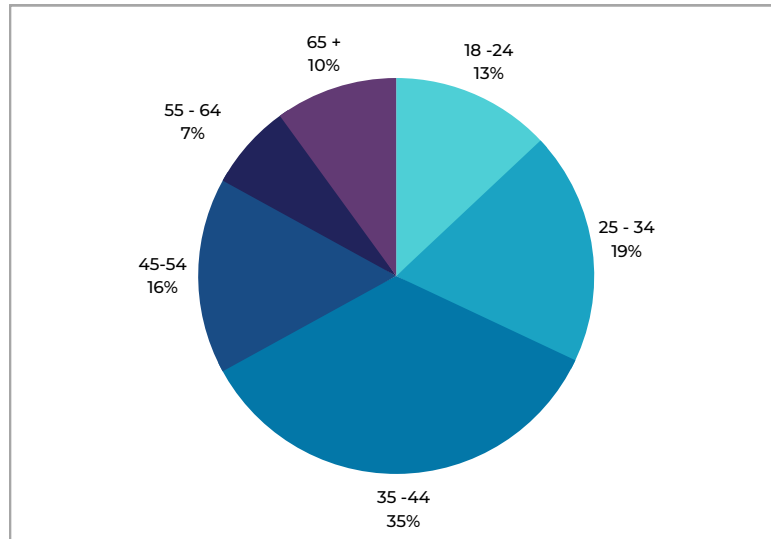


Figure 2: Breakdown of extremely interested and very interested respondents by age (n=151)

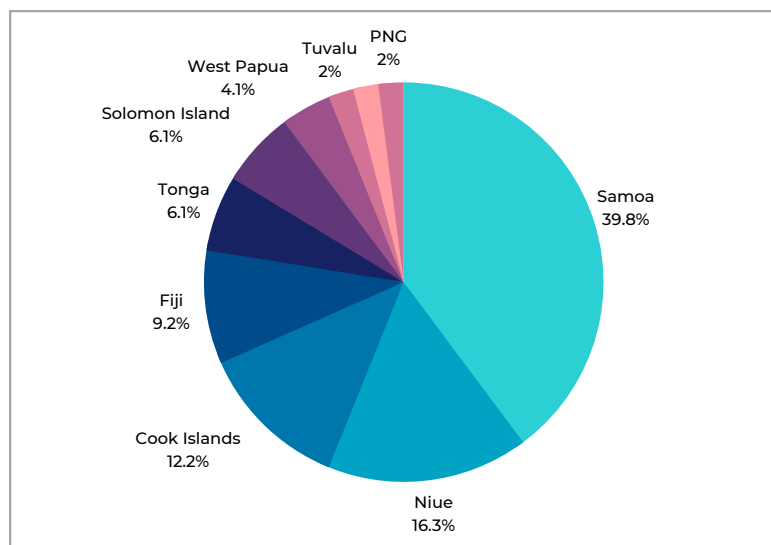


Figure 3: Breakdown of extremely interested and very interested respondents by ethnic identity (n=151)

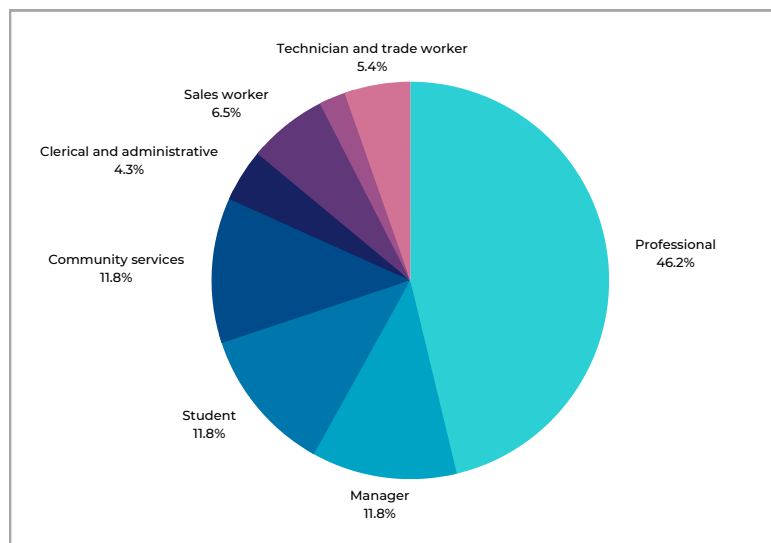


Figure 4: Breakdown of extremely interested and very interested respondents by occupation (n=151)

Somewhat-interested, not-so-interested and not-interested cohort

“Exhibitions that reflect the awesomeness of Pacific people as they were back in the day as well as right now. We hear so much about the negative in the media. I want to hear more about our strengths and ingenuity. Mana enhancing.”

When asked an open-ended question about what would make museums more interesting, the somewhat-interested, not-so-interested, and not-interested cohort described the need for:

More interactive and engaging exhibits and activities

“More interactive displays and more activities for families.”

“More people talking explaining letting us know the background rather than reading.”

Exhibits that are relevant to their lives and their own personal stories

“I See Me - ensure the collections reflect who we are today as Pacific in Aotearoa NZ.”

More mana-enhancing dynamic displays, live performances, workshops, and celebrations that reflect Pacific culture

“Exhibitions that are relevant to me, that have dynamic display and have special evenings eg. Pacific journeys featuring Pacific storytellers, musicians, artists.”

“Exhibitions that reflect the awesomeness of Pacific people as they were back in the day as well as right now. We hear so much about the negative in the media. I want to hear more about our strengths and ingenuity. Mana enhancing.”

“More talanoa on voyages with visual representation and languages present. Outline the science of voyaging (cosmology, canoe engineering, and navigating tools/resources).”

More community involvement

“Cultural celebrations – have our community events there.”

“Inviting the wider community to events relative to Pacific people and promoting collections etc more.”

What would make museums more interesting for the somewhat-interested, not-so-interested, and not-interested cohort?

Interestingly, the somewhat-interested, not-so-interested, and not-interested cohort desire more interactive and engaging exhibits and activities. They want exhibits that are relevant to their personal stories and lives. Pacific peoples in this cohort would also like more mana-enhancing dynamic displays, live performances, workshops, and celebrations that reflect Pacific culture. Additionally, there is a desire for greater community involvement, including inviting the wider community to events and cultural celebrations.

“The ANZAC exhibition was fantastic. We spent hours there, and if it weren’t for the little one, we would have stayed longer. To have an exhibition of this scale to bring Pacific migration and stories from the Pacific to life would be incredible. And then to have this be a travelling exhibition – wow! Magical.”

The somewhat-interested, not-so-interested, and not-interested cohort had lower levels of engagement with museums. However, they still had high visitation rates, with 49% visiting four or more times in the last three years, 39% visiting 1 to 3 times, and 12% not visiting in the previous three years. This level of engagement reflects a high level of interaction with museum (Infographic).

“not putting Pacific and/or Indigenous near or as part of the natural history sections.”

Summary of interest in museums

The survey results reveal that overall, Pacific peoples are highly interested in museums. Specifically, those who are extremely-interested and very-interested tend to engage more with museums and possess a greater appreciation for the opportunity’s museums offer to connect with history and culture, admire art, and explore diverse cultures. These individuals view museums as a means of reconnecting with their roots and celebrating their Pacific heritage. They also stress the importance of museums treating Pacific taonga respectfully and rejecting any notions of colonisation. On the other hand, the somewhat-interested, not-so-interested, and not-interested cohorts desire more dynamic, interactive, and engaging exhibits and activities relevant to their personal stories and lives. They prefer these exhibits to be delivered in a mana-enhancing way that actively involves Pacific communities.

“I See Me – ensure the collections reflect who we are today as Pacific in Aotearoa NZ.”

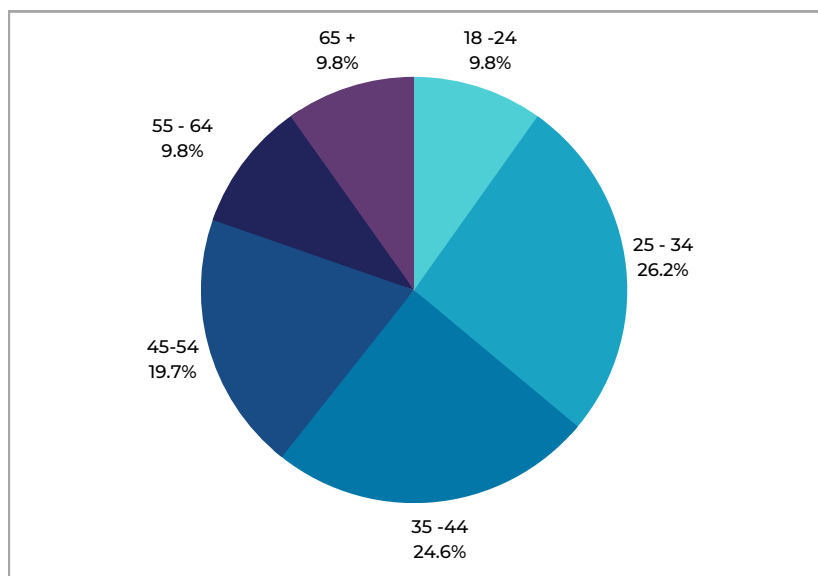


Figure 5: Breakdown of somewhat interested, not so interested and not interested respondents by age (n=64)

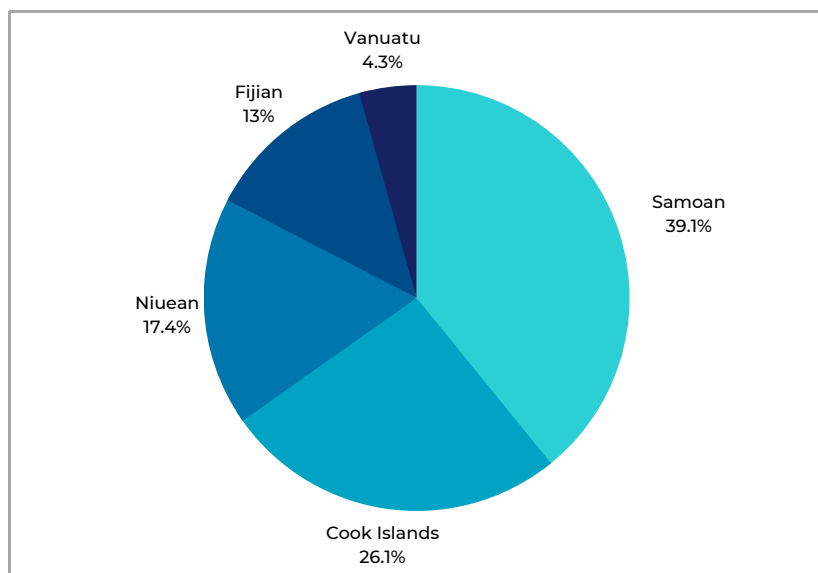


Figure 6: Breakdown of somewhat interested, not so interested and not interested respondents by ethnic identity (n=64)

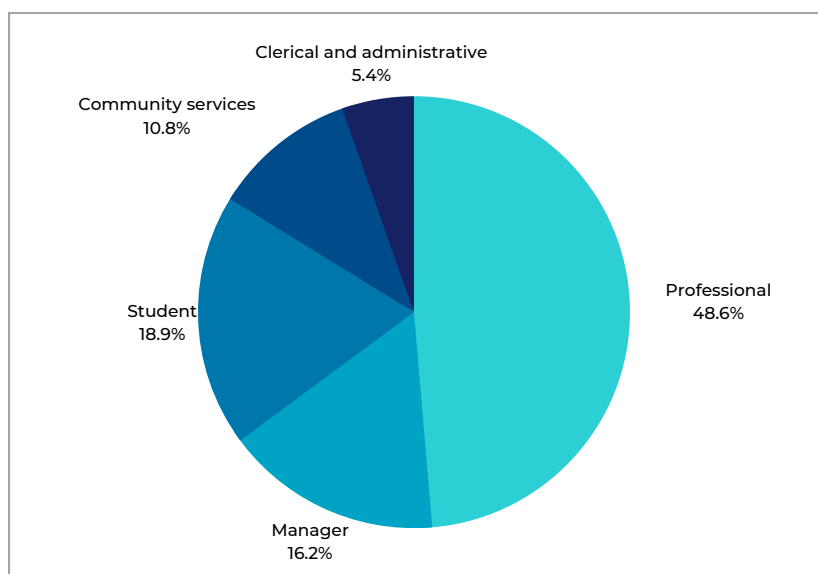


Figure 7: Breakdown of somewhat interested, not so interested and not interested respondents by occupation (n=64)

Visiting frequency, most frequented museums and barriers

This section explores the frequency of museum visits among Pacific users and examines the factors that hinder their engagement with museums. Respondents were asked about their museum visits in the past three years, with options ranging from no times to more than 10 times (Figure 8). Based on their responses, respondents were categorised as low users (0 visits), moderate users (1 to 3 visits), and high users (4 or more visits). In addition, moderate and high users were asked about the museums they frequented the most.

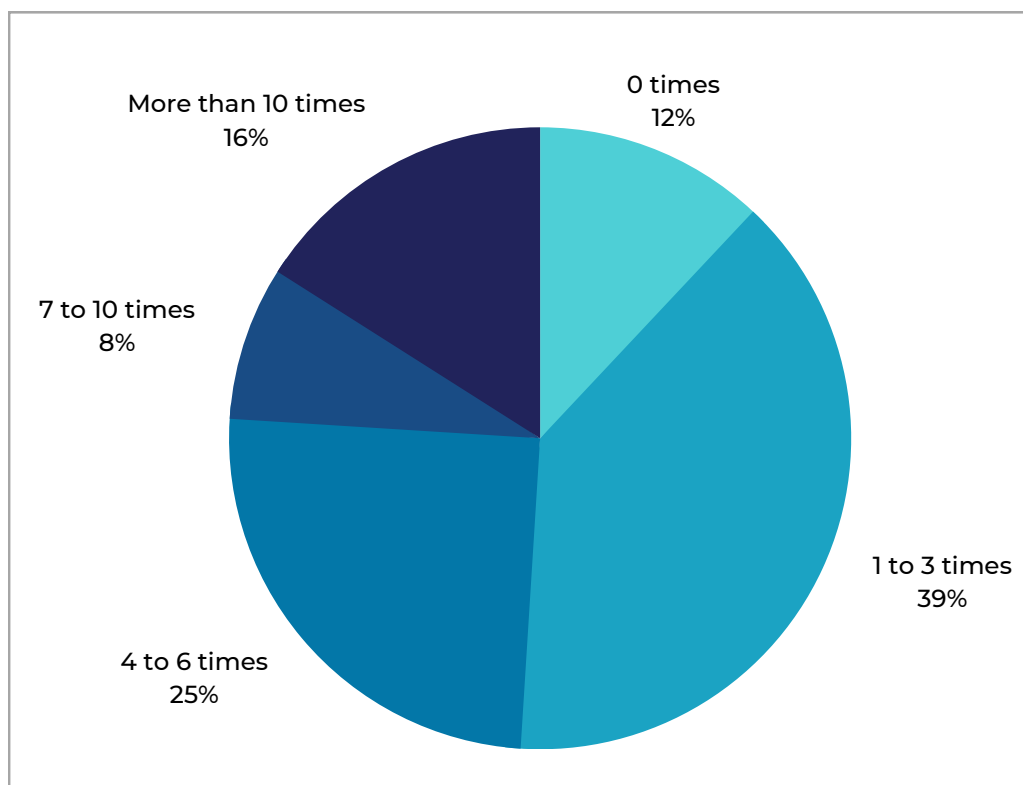


Figure 8: Museum visiting frequency of respondents in the last 3 years (n=179)

Low users: '0' times in the last three years

Low users are Pacific peoples who visited a museum zero times in the last three years. The four significant barriers for this cohort to visit museums were:

1. Usually, I don't know what is on (23%)
2. Too far to travel (23%)
3. Lack of transport (13%)
4. Not enough time (9%)

Several barriers hindered low users from engaging in museum experiences. First, a notable obstacle was the lack of awareness about the exhibitions and events taking place, with 23% of respondents stating that they simply didn't know what was on. Additionally, an equal percentage (23%) mentioned that the distance to the museums posed a challenge, as they were considered too far to travel comfortably. Transportation issues were also prevalent, with 13% indicating a lack of access to suitable means of transport. Finally, 9% of Pacific peoples expressed that their busy schedules and limited time prevented them from visiting museums more often (Figure 9).

Moderate users: '1 to 3' times in the last three years

Moderate users consist of Pacific peoples who visited a museum one to three times in the last three years. The four primary barriers for this cohort to visit museums were (Figure 10):

1. Not enough time (24%)
2. Usually, I don't know what is on (21%)
3. Too far to travel (20%)
4. Too expensive (6%)

Moderate users frequent major and minor museums across Aotearoa New Zealand, with the most popular museums being Te Papa (40%) and Auckland Museum (34%). Pacific peoples also identified visiting Te Manawa Museum in Palmerston North, Tūhura Otago Museum in Otago, Waikato Museum in Hamilton, Te Awahou Nieuwe Stroom in Foxton, Papakura Museum, Fell Locomotive Museum in Featherston, and Canterbury Museum. This wide range of museums indicates that medium users will visit smaller regional museums but are more likely to frequent Te Papa and Auckland Museum. Several international Pacific museums were listed (Tāoga Niue, Fiji Museum and Honiara) indicating that Pacific regional museums are also of interest to medium users (Infographic)

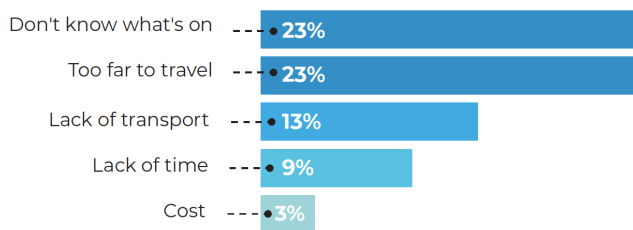


Figure 9: Top reasons why low users (0 times in the last three years main barriers) do not visit museums

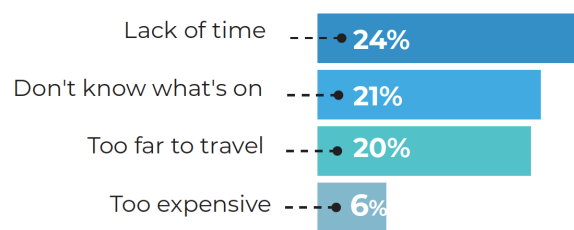


Figure 10: Top reasons why moderate users (1 to 3 times in the last three years) do not visit museums more

High users: '4 to 10 or more' visits in the last three years

High users consist of Pacific peoples who visited a museum four to more than ten times in the last three years. The four major barriers for this cohort to visit museums were (Figure 11):

1. Not enough time (31%)
2. Usually, I don't know what is on (23%)
3. Too far to travel (14%)
4. Lack of transport (6%)

High users frequent major and minor museums across Aotearoa New Zealand, with the most popular museums being Te Papa (46%) and Auckland Museum (32%). Pacific peoples also identified visiting Otago Museum, Christchurch, Tairāwhiti Museum, Fresh Gallery, Pataka, Art Museums, Canterbury, Dunedin Museum, Rotorua Museum and Tāmaki.⁷⁹ This wide range of museums (and galleries) indicates that medium users will visit smaller regional museums but are more likely to frequent Te Papa and Auckland Museum.

79. Names of museums are direct quotes from survey data

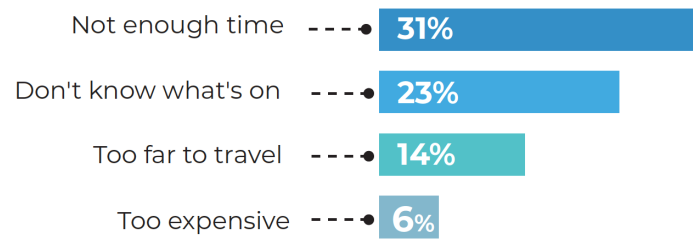


Figure 11: Top reasons why high users ('4 to 10 or more' times in the last three years) do not visit museums more

Summary of visiting frequency, most frequented museums and barriers

The survey data reveals significant barriers preventing low, medium, and high users from visiting museums. For low users, the significant barriers were lack of awareness of what is on, distance to travel, lack of transportation, and not having enough time. For medium users, the primary obstacles were not having enough time, lack of awareness of what is on, distance to travel, and cost. Whilst high users faced the same challenges, lack of time and awareness were more pronounced. Interestingly, out of all the user levels, low users (0 visits in the last three years) highlighted physical barriers such as too far to travel and lack of transport as the major restrictions in visiting museums more, with a combined percentage of 36%. In contrast, medium and high users highlighted physical barriers as a restriction at 25% and 20% respectively. Finally, the survey responses also show that medium and high users visit major and minor museums across Aotearoa New Zealand, with Te Papa and Auckland Museum being the most frequented. This primacy highlights the importance of these two museums in attracting Pacific peoples. Additionally, the survey suggests that regional museums are also of interest to Pacific peoples but that they are more likely to visit Te Papa and Auckland Museum.

Accessing museums online (websites and social media)

This section investigates how Pacific peoples perceive and engage with accessing museums through online platforms. Participants were asked whether they had accessed museums online (via websites or social media) in the past three years, and their responses were categorised into two groups: those who had accessed online museums and those who had not. The data indicates that only 42% of the total respondents had accessed museums online, while 58% had not (Figure 12).

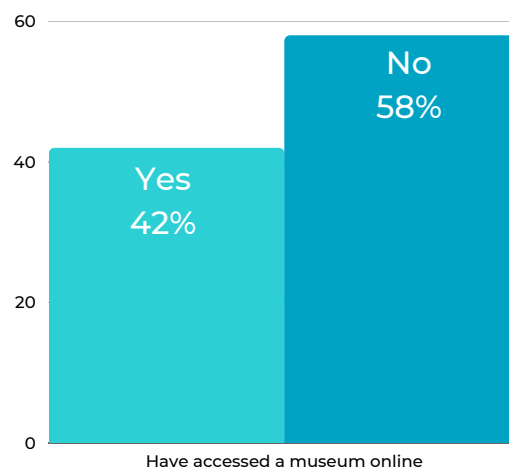


Figure 12: Breakdown of respondents who had or had not accessed museums online (website or social media) (n=176)

Pacific peoples who access museums online

“If there were ways in which you could interact with artefacts/stories/histories without necessarily having to go to museums (especially if you live in a town/city that doesn’t get much variation in exhibits).”

The survey asked individuals who had accessed museums online in the last three years to provide reasons for their virtual visits. In addition, an open-ended question was posed to determine what could potentially encourage them to visit museums online more frequently. Results showed that the majority of Pacific respondents identified three main reasons for their online visits: accessing online collections (27%), planning future visits (20%), and utilising learning resources (17%) (Figure 13).

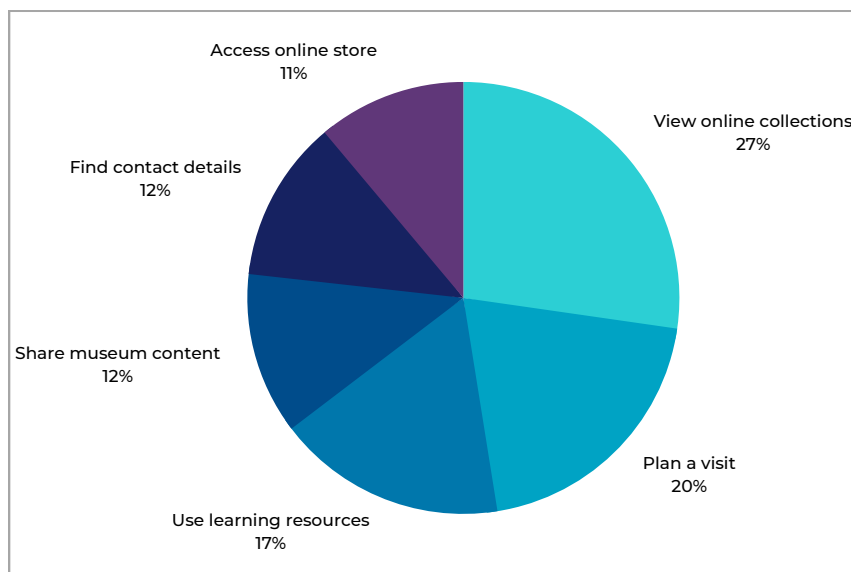


Figure 13: Main reasons for those who visited a museum online (website or social media account) (n= 174)

Pacific peoples who accessed museums online in the last three years indicate they would use online museum services more for the following reasons:

Accessibility: ensuring an easy-to-navigate website that is mobile friendly

“Online collections being more accessible and easier to find. For example, I don’t even know if Te Papa has a Facebook page but would be cool to see a weekly featured collection or objects from the collection because there is so much out there.”

Engagement: content that is interesting to people of all ages

“More often, I would use museum to see the transformation of culture that evolved overtime. Tapping into to see what interesting artefact and findings.”

“...interest in specific items from specific places, or to see what events are happening or to find out what new exhibitions are in place.”

“More storytelling – making the stories about exhibitions come to live in a vibrant way.”

“Maybe tie the online service with the various Pacific language week’s and dedicate a TAB for the relevant Pacific Nation’s language for that time. E.g., Samoan ... October 16–23.”

“A competition of sorts e.g., if there’s a treasure hunt competition to answer questions about current services/exhibitions with a minor prize.”

Research: easily locatable information about services/exhibitions and access to collections for study

“More Melanesian content and Collection visibility – more Melanesian (Papua New Guinea, West Papua, Solomon Islands, Niue – Vanuatu, Fiji and New Caledonia) and visibility of Communities and art online – more information and research.”

“Research, family histories.”

Interactivity: virtual viewings, online content linked to Pacific language weeks, games or quizzes

“Have it more interactive – have games that relate or quizzes.”

“If there were ways in which you could interact with artefacts/stories/histories without necessarily having to go to museums (especially if you live in a town/city that doesn’t get much variation in exhibits).”

Overall, Pacific peoples highlight the importance of providing an accessible and engaging online presence for museums to better serve their audiences in the digital age. By providing convenient access to collections and resources and interactive elements such as games or quizzes, museums can create engaging content that will draw in visitors virtually and in person. Additionally, linking online services with Pacific language weeks can help highlight the importance of these cultures while furthering knowledge around them.

“I used online resources for specific purposes, e.g., Matariki, Waitangi Day. Outside of this, I would use it out of personal interest, e.g., to explore further what my child is learning or begin a new project with them.”

Pacific peoples who do not access the museum online

“Not aware of what’s available and the relevance to me.”

Respondents who had not accessed museums online were asked an open-ended question about the reasons why they had not done so. Pacific peoples who have not accessed museums online have highlighted many barriers to their access, including:

Lack of awareness and marketing around its existence

“Not sure I wasn’t aware you could access virtual museum.”

“To be honest I didn’t know they had online content”

Preferring to visit the collection in person for a unique experience

“I prefer seeing it in person. The online museum experience is not the same compared to other things that have moved online.”

Being uninterested

“Don’t find things about the museum exciting and engaging enough to sit online and go through.”

No time

“Didn’t know it existed. Don’t have the time.”

Pacific peoples who have not accessed museums online have cited a lack of awareness and marketing around the availability of virtual museums, preferring in-person visits for a unique experience, being uninterested in online content, and lack of time as barriers to their access. Some respondents were unaware that virtual museums existed, and others did not find the online experience engaging enough.

“No time, and I don’t think we’re aware of online museums in our Pacific communities (as in if it does exist, it’s not marketed?).”

Summary of accessing the museum online (website or social media)

Pacific peoples have mixed levels of engagement with accessing museums through online platforms. While 42% of respondents had accessed museums online in the past three years, 58% had not. Pacific peoples who had accessed museums online were primarily motivated by accessibility, engagement, research, and interactivity. They desired easy-to-use, mobile-friendly websites with engaging content, interactive elements like quizzes and games, and convenient access to information about exhibitions and collections. They also suggested tying online services to Pacific language weeks to highlight the importance of these cultures and increase knowledge about them. In contrast, Pacific peoples who had not accessed museums online cited several barriers, including a lack of awareness and marketing around the availability of virtual museums, preference for in-person visits for a unique experience, lack of interest in online content, and lack of time. Some respondents were unaware that virtual museums existed, and others did not find the online experience engaging enough.

“I prefer in person, it’s the experience that makes it unique and captivates attention. However, for those who cannot visit museums physically, then online is a good alternative.”

Visits to & general knowledge of Te Papa

As the national museum for Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Papa holds an extensive collection of taonga from across Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia. Accordingly, within this survey, Te Papa has been a popular attraction for Pacific peoples, with 62% of respondents visiting Te Papa in the last three years compared to 38% who had not (Figure 14). Te Papa remains popular among Pacific communities. The friendly atmosphere, interactive exhibits, and special events were cited as highlights, with Pacific collections, art exhibitions, and play areas for children being among the most popular features.

Pacific peoples who have visited Te Papa in the last three years

“The welcoming feeling when you enter the museum and the way in which the exhibits (both permanent and temporary) are designed.”

Respondents who had visited Te Papa in the last three years were asked two open-ended questions about their favourite parts and what would make Te Papa more enjoyable.

Favourite parts

Pacific peoples who visited Te Papa in the last three years identified a wide range of favourite parts:

Pacific collections

“The Polynesian section. I’d never seen Polynesian history in a museum just like that. I loved seeing the huge Waka and learning about my culture.”

Art exhibitions

“My husband’s painting on display next to his fave NZ artists, Ralph Hotere and Colin McCahon.”

Interactive play areas for children

“All the hands-on things for children to interact with. Also, all the Pacific Collection displays – front of house and back of house tours.”

ANZAC war stories

“I liked how interactive their ANZAC exhibition was a few years ago, it was cool to see how realistic they were able to make it.”

Special exhibitions and interactivities

“The ANZAC Exhibition, The World of Wearable Arts Exhibition The native species (birds, bugs etc.) exhibition on second floor.”

Pacific peoples also reflected on the joy of taking their families to see parts of the museum, such as Te Marae Te Hono ki Hawaiki. Exhibitions and activities that have included live talks on Pacific perspectives in art and after-hours events, which provided an exciting insight into the history of Aotearoa New Zealand and Samoa, were also a highlight for Pacific peoples.

“My favourite part was taking all my family there for the first time and watching them enjoy the whole experience and seeing them look interesting and curious was the best part.”

What would make Te Papa more enjoyable?

Pacific peoples who visit Te Papa have also noted areas for improvement:

Increased accessibility

“Being able to access it more.”

“Access - don’t live in Wellington.”

Interactive/immersive experiences

“More interactive exhibitions/displays. Access to Pacific artefacts, under a controlled environment.”

More Pacific history, culture, and staff

“More Pacific artefacts from other Pacific countries like the Solomon Islands. More Pacific performances”

“More Māori and Pacific staff, they seemed pretty stretched with staffing and at times.”

More affordable food options

“More food options.”

“I already love visiting Te Papa, maybe cheaper food?”

Live performances

“More live displays/performances.”

Pacific peoples visiting Te Papa have suggested several key ways to make the experience more enjoyable. These include improving accessibility for those who do not reside in Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington, offering more interactive and immersive experiences, showcasing a richer representation of Pacific history and culture, increasing the availability of Pacific artifacts and performances, providing more affordable food options, and increasing the number of live performances.

In addition, some visitors have suggested the importance of having more Māori and Pacific staff members to accommodate guests better. Furthermore, other recommendations include providing maps tailored to different audiences, establishing whānau lounges on each floor, incorporating storytelling within exhibits, and offering special exhibits at an affordable cost.

“Pacific origins of Aotearoa exhibit; telling the truth about vaka ocean going being developed and led by Pacific Peoples originally not Māori.”

Pacific peoples who have visited Te Papa in the last three years have a positive view of the museum, citing its welcoming atmosphere, interactive exhibits, and special events as highlights of their experience. Pacific collections, art exhibitions, and interactive play areas for children were among the favourite parts of the museum, with many visitors also noting the joy of sharing the experience with their families.

However, there are also areas for improvement that Pacific visitors identified. These include improving accessibility for those who do not live in Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington, providing more interactive and immersive experiences, showcasing a richer representation of Pacific history and culture, increasing the availability of Pacific artefacts and performances, providing more affordable food options, and increasing the number of live performances. Overall, it appears that Pacific visitors appreciate the efforts made by Te Papa to engage with Pacific cultures and histories but feel that there is room for improvement in terms of making the museum more accessible and inclusive for Pacific peoples.

“The Polynesian section. I’d never seen Polynesian history in a museum just like that. I loved seeing the huge Waka and learning about my culture.”

Pacific peoples who have not visited Te Papa in the last three years

“I live and study in Dunedin for the last 3 years, and I continue to do. Perhaps more emphasis on giving opportunities to us Melanesians and Micronesians who minor communities to make a trip there. I don’t know how but maybe special showings, subsidised costs etc.”

Respondents who had not visited Te Papa in the last three years were asked one open-ended question about why they had not done so.

Barriers to visiting Te Papa

Overwhelmingly, Pacific peoples who have not visited Te Papa note that it is because they do not live in Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington (71%). However, other reasons were also given:

- COVID-19 restrictions
- Did not know where Te Papa was located
- Not sure what was on offer at Te Papa
- Other commitments make it impossible to visit

Pacific people’s desire to go to Te Papa, but its location in Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington makes travel challenging. Pacific peoples who do travel to Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington note that other commitments often stop them from visiting.

“I live in Auckland. Whenever I’m in Wellington, it’s for work, and my schedule is very tight. I would love to take my daughter there and make a day of it.”

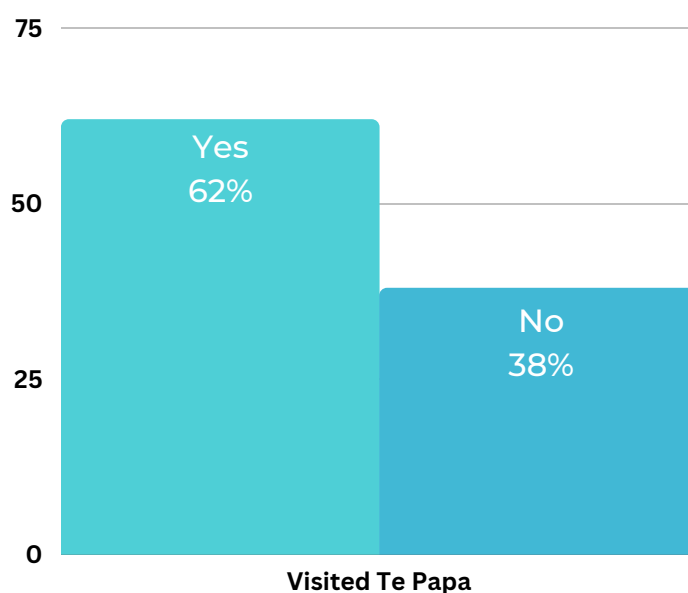


Figure 14: Percentage of respondents who have visited Te Papa in the last 3 years. (n=169)

General knowledge of Te Papa Collections

Survey participants were asked a series of three questions relative to their general knowledge of Te Papa, including their knowledge of special collections, their ability to view special collections, and online access to collections. Results from these questions indicated there exists an uneven distribution of Pacific peoples who are aware that Te Papa has more taonga that are not on display (61% aware and 39% unaware) and inversely that you can access Te Papa's collections online (32% aware and 68% unaware). Unsurprisingly, people who frequent Te Papa are more aware of Te Papa's storage holdings and that requests can be made to view stored taonga. Overwhelmingly, Pacific people did not know that requests can be made to view taonga in the storerooms (77% unaware). Overall, this data suggests that there may be a need for Te Papa to increase awareness and promote access to their special collections among the Pacific community.

Summary of visiting Te Papa

Te Papa's appeal to Pacific communities continues to be popular, as the survey results show. The results indicate that 62% of respondents have visited the museum in the last three years, citing the friendly atmosphere, interactive exhibits, and special events as highlights. Pacific collections, art exhibitions, and play areas for children were among the most popular features, with visitors enjoying the opportunity to share their experiences with family members. However, the same respondents identified several areas for improvement, such as enhancing accessibility for those outside Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington, offering more interactive and immersive experiences, showcasing a more comprehensive representation of Pacific history and culture, increasing the availability of Pacific artefacts and performances, providing more affordable food options, and expanding the number of live performances.

Notably, of those Pacific respondents who had not visited in the past three years, 71% cited Te Papa's location as a major obstacle, along with COVID-19 restrictions, insufficient knowledge about the museum's location and offerings, and other commitments.

The survey also highlights a need for Te Papa to increase awareness and access to its special collections amongst Pacific communities. Although 61% of respondents were aware of Te Papa's off-display taonga, and 42% knew about the museum's online access to collections, the majority (77%) were unaware that they could request to view stored taonga in the storerooms.

Overall, Te Papa should continue to endeavour to enhance the accessibility for visitors from outside of Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington, provide immersive experiences, bolster the representation of Pacific history and culture, augment the availability of Pacific artefacts and performances, offer affordable dining options, expand live performances, increase awareness and accessibility to the special collections, and inform Pacific communities of the opportunity to view treasured taonga housed within the store rooms.

Pacific peoples' perceptions of museum collections and activities

To gauge the interest of Pacific peoples in museum collections and activities, participants were presented with six sets of images: three related to collections (science, Pacific, and general) and three related to Pacific activities (exhibits, events, and stored collections). They were then asked to rate each image on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 indicating the highest level of interest.

To analyse the data, we utilised mean and median as measures of central tendency, providing insight into how a dataset is clustered around a central value. Measuring central tendency offers a useful single point of representation of the data, facilitates comparisons, and serves as a starting point for more intricate analyses. A dataset's mean, or average value, is calculated by summing all values and dividing by the total number of observations. However, outliers and extreme values can skew the mean. Alternatively, the median, the middle value when a dataset is arranged in ascending or descending order, is less susceptible to the effects of outliers, rendering it a more dependable measure of central tendency.

It is important to note that a disparity between the mean and median implies that the data distribution is skewed. Specifically, if the mean exceeds the median, it indicates a right-skewed data set, which implies that extremely high values in the data set are elevating the average. Conversely, if the median surpasses the mean, it indicates a left-skewed data set, suggesting that some extremely low values in the data set drag down the average.

The results and analysis for both collections and activities are presented below.

Perceptions of the science, Pacific, and general collections

For this part of the survey, Pacific peoples were asked to consider three different images (Image 1) from Te Papa's collections and rate their interest score out of a total of 10. The Pacific collection had the highest interest, with Pacific moderate users being the least interested out of all cohorts (median interest level 8.5/10). The general collection had slightly more interest than the science collection, with moderate users showing the lowest level of interest in the science collection (median interest level 5.5/10) (Table 1)

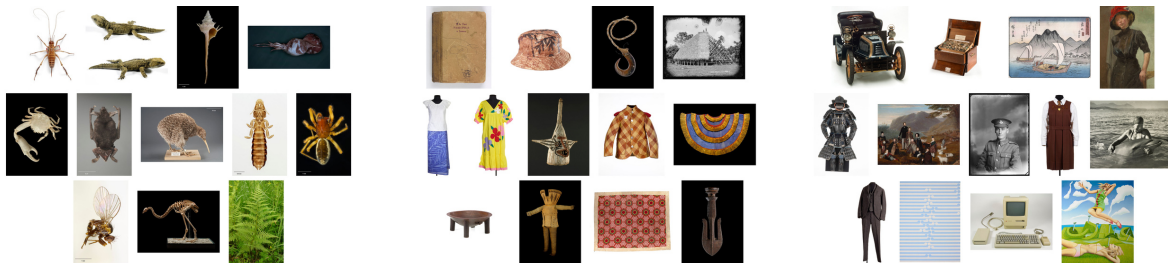


Image 1: Image of collections displayed in survey (in order left to right science, Pacific and general collections)

		Mean interest level	Median interest level
Science Collection	Overall	6.17	6
	Low user	6.18	7
	Moderate user	6.02	5.5
	High user	6.59	7
Pacific Collection	Overall	8.44	9
	Low user	8.53	10
	Moderate user	8.35	8.5
	High user	8.56	10
General Collection	Overall	6.35	7
	Low user	6.39	7
	Moderate user	6.61	7
	High user	6.29	7

Table 1: Mean and median interest score (out of 10) for science, Pacific and general collections of low, moderate and high users

The information in Table 1 describes Pacific people's interest levels to specific collections, namely science, Pacific, and general. The table shows overall mean and median values, as well as a detailed breakdown of interest levels among low, moderate, and high user groups

For the interest in science collections the overall mean value is 6.17, indicating a moderate level of interest in science collections, and the median value of 6 suggests an even distribution of interest levels. However, there are differences between the mean and median values when looking at user-level breakdown. The low user group has a higher median value than the mean, suggesting a few individuals with very low levels of interest in this group. In contrast, the moderate user group has a lower median value than the mean, indicating a few individuals with particularly high levels of interest in this group. The high user group has the highest mean and median values, indicating the highest overall interest in science collections.

The Pacific collection had the highest mean and median scores for Pacific peoples overall. The overall interest level is 8.44, and the median is 9, suggesting the existence of lower interest level outliers. The low user group has a slightly higher mean interest level of 8.53, but a higher median of 10, indicating a few users with very low interest levels in this group. The moderate user group has a lower mean interest level of 8.35 and a median of 8.5, indicating a more balanced distribution of interest. The high user group has the highest mean interest level of 8.56 and a median of 10, and like lower users, have a small number of users with very low interest levels. The data suggests differences in interest levels between user groups, with the high user group showing the highest overall interest in the Pacific collection.

For the general collection, overall mean is 6.35 and median 7. The mean and median values are similar, indicating a relatively symmetric distribution with no significant outliers. The moderate user group has the highest mean value of 6.61, while low and high user groups have mean values of 6.39 and 6.29 respectively. However, these differences between means are small, and all three user categories have a median of 7, indicating that the majority of users have a similar level of interest in the general collection.

The data suggests that the high user group has the highest overall interest in science and Pacific collections, while interest in the general collection is relatively similar across all user groups. There are differences between mean and median values in each group, inferring the presence of outliers, particularly for low and high user interest in Pacific collections. Overall, however, the data indicates that Pacific people have moderate to high interest in these collections.

Perceptions of museum activities (Pacific exhibits, Pacific events, and stored Pacific collections)

Analysis of Pacific exhibits, events and stored collections reveals that overall interest in these topics is high, with median interest levels between 8–9. Low users had a slightly lower mean interest level of 6.6–8.3 but retained a median interest level of 7–10. Moderate users had a mean interest level of 7.6–8.2 and a median interest level of 8–9, while high users had the highest mean interest at 8.05–8.5 and a median interest level of 8–9. Overall, Pacific activities have high levels of interest, coherent with the interest levels of Pacific collections in the previous section on Pacific collections (Table 2.)

Interestingly, Pacific events hold more appeal for Pacific audiences than Pacific exhibits or stored collections. In fact, the mean interest level for Pacific events is higher than that of Pacific exhibits or stored collections, with a median interest level of 9. This trend is consistent across all user groups, including low, moderate, and high users, indicating that interest in Pacific events is consistently high regardless of the level of engagement with Pacific culture. While interest in Pacific exhibits and stored collections is also high, the mean interest levels for these categories are lower than that of Pacific events, particularly among moderate users. Taken together, these findings suggest that Pacific audiences may be more likely to attend and actively participate in Pacific events compared to exhibits or stored collections.



Image 2: Image of activities displayed in survey (in order left to right Pacific exhibits, Pacific events & Stored Pacific collections)

		Mean interest level	Median interest level
Pacific exhibits	Overall	8	8
	Low user	6.6	7
	Moderate user	7.6	7.5
	High user	8.05	8
Pacific events	Overall	8	9
	Low user	8.3	10
	Moderate users	8.2	9
	High user	8.5	9
Stored Pacific collections	Overall	8	9
	Low user	8.1	10
	Moderate user	8	8
	High user	8.5	9

Table 2: Mean and median interest score (out of 10) for activities in museums (Pacific exhibits, Pacific events & Stored Pacific collections)

Table 2 provides information on Pacific peoples' interests in various museum activities, including Pacific exhibits, events, and stored Pacific collections.

Pacific exhibits elicit a high level of interest, with a median and mean of 8, indicating a symmetric distribution. However, the mean and median values for the low, moderate, and high user groups show some differences. The low user group has a lower mean of 6.6 compared to the median of 7, suggesting a few participants had significantly lower interest levels. The moderate and high user groups have mean values of 7.6 and 8.05, respectively, and median values of 7.5 and 8, suggesting some users had higher interest levels.

Pacific events show the highest interest levels for Pacific peoples that suggests a preference for live events or community gatherings within museums. For Pacific events, the mean interest level for all users is 8, while the median is 9, indicating a significant number of low interest users. The means for the low, moderate, and high user groups are 8.3, 8.2, and 8.5, respectively, with medians remaining high at 10, 9, and 9. The differences between the means and medians suggest the potential for a number of users who have low interest in Pacific events.

Stored Pacific collections have an overall mean and median value of 8 and 9, respectively. The mean values for the low and high user groups are 8.1 and 8.5, respectively, whereas the median values for these groups are 10 and 9, respectively. The moderate user group has a mean value of 8 and a median value of 8. This data suggests that there are some outliers with low interest in the low and high user groups.

Overall, there is a strong interest in Pacific exhibits, events, and stored collections, with most participants rating them highly. However, the difference between mean and median measures suggests that a proportion of participants may show low interest in Pacific activities, even among those who are high users.

Summary of Pacific peoples' perceptions of collections and activities

The survey results indicate that Pacific peoples are highly interested in Pacific collections overall compared to other collections, with the general collection having slightly more interest than the science collection. The high user group had the highest interest levels in science and Pacific collections, while interest in the general collection was relatively similar across all user groups. Additionally, interest levels in Pacific exhibits, events, and stored Pacific collections showed high levels of interest overall with Pacific events demonstrating the highest mean and median interest levels across all user levels compared to Pacific events and stored Pacific collections.

Pacific peoples and Museum engagement

Difference between low, moderate and high Pacific museum users

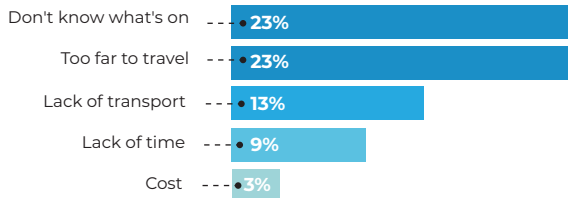
www.matadaresearch.co.nz

Low Users : Those who have visited a museum '0 times' in the last three years.

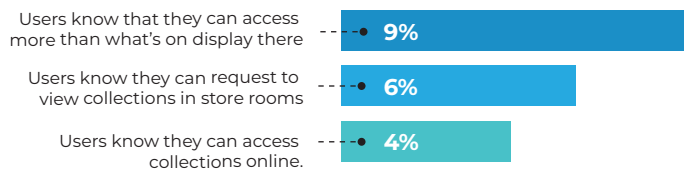
Majority of low users are somewhat interested, not so interested and not interest, but make up only 12.3% of these respondents



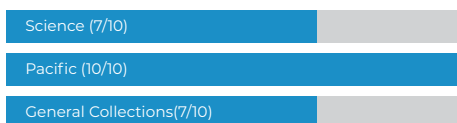
Top reasons why low users do not visit museums



Knowledge of Te Papa



Interest in Collections (Median Scores)

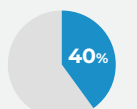


Moderate Users : Those who have visited a museum '1 to 3 times' in the last three years.

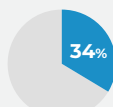
Majority of moderate users are somewhat interested, not so interested and not interest. Making up 39% of these respondents.



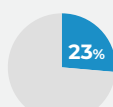
The main museums that moderate users visited in their most recent visit were



Auckland Museum

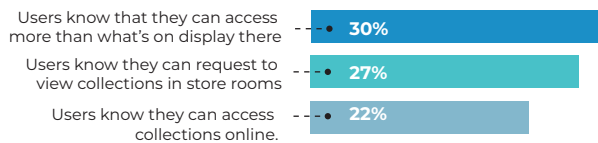


Te Papa



Other Museums

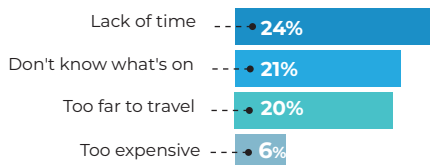
Knowledge of Te Papa



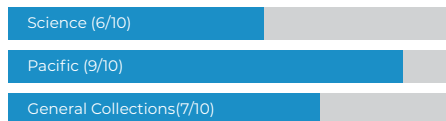
Moderate users make up **23%** of respondents who have accessed a museum online



Top reasons why moderate users do not visit museums more often



Interest in Collections (Median Scores)

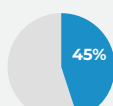


High Users : Those who have visited a museum '4 to more than 10 times' in the last three years.

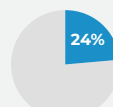
Majority of high users are extremely interested and very interested. Making up 60.5% of these respondents.



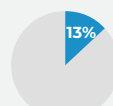
The main museums that high users visited in their most recent visit were



Te Papa

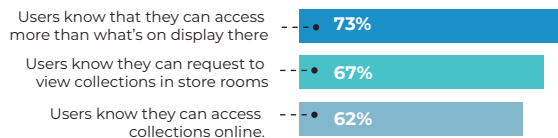


Auckland Museum

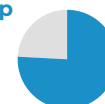


Other Museums

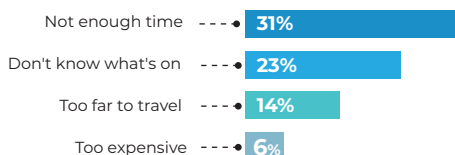
Knowledge of Te Papa



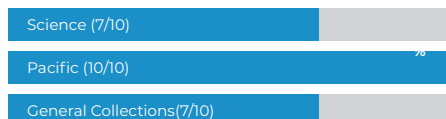
High users make up **76%** of respondents who have accessed a museum online



Top reasons why high users do not visit museums more often



Interest in Collections (Median Scores)



Pacific peoples and museum engagement (Infographic)

Analysis of survey data revealed a complex narrative surrounding Pacific peoples' engagement with museums. It provided insight into the needs of this group and how museums could better serve them.

Low users (0 museum visits in the last three years) were identified as those who are not interested or somewhat interested in visiting them, and the top reasons they gave for not doing so were a low awareness of what was on, too far to travel, and lack of transport. Despite this lack of visitation, low users expressed strong interest in museum collections, with median scores of 7/10 for science, 10/10 for Pacific and 7/10 for general collections respectively. Moreover, low users had high interest scores relative to Pacific exhibits (7/10), Pacific events (10/10) and stored Pacific collections (10/10). Furthermore, they have limited knowledge about Te Papa and its offerings, with only a small percentage knowing that they can access more than what is displayed in the museum.

Moderate users (1–3 museum visits in the last three years) noted that their most frequented museums included Auckland Museum (40%), followed by Te Papa (34%) and other museums (27%). They reported reasons for not visiting more often to be lack of time, usually not knowing what is on, it being too far to travel and cost. Online usage among moderate users is low, with only 28% using museum websites and social media, while 48% do not use these platforms. Further, their knowledge of Te Papa is also limited, with only 30% knowing they can access more than what is on display, 27% that they can request to view collections in store rooms, and 22% using the online catalogue. However, like low users, moderate users had a median interest score of 5.5/10 for science, 8.5/10 for Pacific and 7/10 for General collections, as well as 7/10 for Pacific exhibits, 9/10 for Pacific events, and 8/10 for stored Pacific collections.

High users (4 or more museum visits in the last three years) are likely to be extremely or very interested in visiting museums, with their primary visits being to Te Papa (45%), Auckland Museum (24%), and Otago Museum (13%). Time constraints, lack of awareness about what is on, distance from the location, and lack of transport were identified as reasons high users do not visit more often. Online usage is high among high users, with 69% using museum websites and social media platforms compared to 34% who do not use these platforms. High user knowledge of Te Papa is also high, with most aware that they can access more than what is on display, request to view collections in store rooms, or access online collections. Finally, high users have higher median interest scores for science (7/10), Pacific (10/10) and General (7/10) collections, as well as interest in Pacific exhibits (8/10), Pacific events (9/10), and stored Pacific collections (9/10).



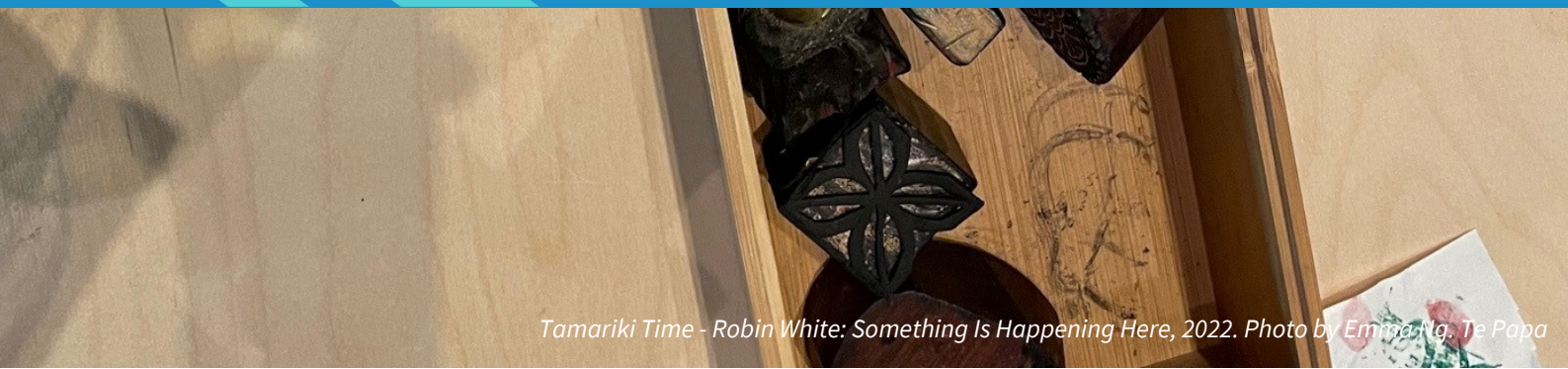
Survey Summary

The survey findings suggest that Pacific peoples have a strong interest in museums collections and events, but lack of awareness, time constraints, and physical barriers prevent them from engaging more. These issues highlight the importance of raising awareness amongst low users to increase their involvement with museums. It is also recommended that moderate users be provided with more knowledge and easier access, while high users should receive a meaningful experience such as online courses, podcasts, or virtual tours. In conclusion, these findings suggest the need for an increased focus on providing Pacific peoples with better access to museums.



Talanoa Findings

"Let's talk about the whole Pacific story, don't just talk about the stuff that we're proud of. Talk about the stuff that we're not super proud of as a country. Why don't we talk about what New Zealand farming did to hollow out the Phosphate? We need to tell that story. Because no one knows that story. Right? "





Te Taiao Nature, 2019. Photo by Maarten Holl. Te Papa.

Talanoa

"I think the purpose of a museum... I think it's more to share. To share important artefacts and tell their story, their history. That's what I think it is." - Cook Islands

This section reflects talanoa with twenty-five Pacific peoples to explore their attitude towards physical and digital museum spaces. The research explores the broad context of access to and consumption of museum content and services from a Pacific peoples' perspective. This section will first explore what Pacific peoples want museums to be, then how Pacific peoples describe and perceive museums, moving onto what museums do that Pacific peoples are satisfied with and why Pacific peoples visit museums, before exploring the barriers to visiting museums and finally, investigating possible solutions to the barriers via what Pacific peoples think museums can do.

Pacific peoples want museums to be...

Places where their stories are told and shared with community

Pacific peoples want museums that share their stories and, by doing so, enable Pacific communities and others to connect to Pacific peoples' histories and contemporary surroundings in Aotearoa New Zealand and the wider Pacific. For Pacific peoples, their stories need to be told by and for Pacific peoples in ways that reflect the vibrant and alive nature of this connection.

The quote below emphasises that museums have a responsibility to hold space and provide platforms for Pacific peoples to share their stories whilst also ensuring that Pacific audiences are welcomed in and can build upon the Pacific stories shared.

*"That is their responsibility, but **it should be our people telling our stories. It's their [museums] responsibility to get us in there.** Like in the museum, and then getting the Pacific people to tour it and tell the stories and everything behind it." - Tokelauan/Tongan*

Pacific peoples imagine storytelling in different ways – storytelling is about breathing life into a space. The quote below shows the importance of music and people, with the idea that the stories should evoke an emotional response.

*"Because I think it is, you know, this is the taonga that New Zealand has created and developed over the years, and, you know, they do have quite a reasonable Pacific collection. You know, **it's kind of it was kind of like, really, really dull.** So, you know, I think one of your pictures that you showed earlier showed some people with, you know, like sitting together and all colourful and, and playing some instruments, and you know, that's what I want to see. I want to see.... **bring the life of the Pacific; don't just show me this necklace.** You know? I want to see... I want to see the life of the Pacific people, and you know, give me something that **I can really, you know, take to heart.**" - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

Sharing stories is about making sure that they endure and survive. The Dawn Raids were often referred to as important for the history and contemporary reality of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, but there remained uncertainty from Pacific peoples about how museums had supported national discussions on the issue.

*"Because we've **never had any exhibits around the Dawn Raids** and that history and how that has **impacted on our people**, and the **continuous impact that it has on our generations.** But um, yeah, that's really, yeah, the knowledge sharing and the holding of knowledge and **ensuring that it survives.**" - Samoan*

Pacific peoples saw the sharing of stories as the ability to bring to light topics that are considered taboo, such as colonisation, suicide, and homelessness. Museums have the potential to hold space for these conversations, but do not necessarily need to lead them.

*"I think that's probably what my museum would put focus around. Real talk, aye. Like stuff that people don't want to talk about? Right? **Topics that are taboo, like colonisation and suicide. Homelessness.**" - Niuean/Cook Island/Samoan*



These events could also be linked to specific times – important anniversaries or memorials could be connected to pop-up exhibitions.

*"And I think timing too. **Timing is quite crucial** when you're trying to, I guess, inform people about our history, you know, **especially if things are happening or like memorials are coming up**, or you know." - Samoan/Māori/Tongan*

Truth telling in Pacific stories was particularly significant to Pacific peoples, and this extended to talanoa about colonisation in New Zealand and its impact on tangata whenua. Pacific peoples see the relationship with tangata whenua as a key part of their story here, and museums could host experts and lead conversations in this space that Pacific peoples could access.

*"**Unless if we're going to be truthful and we're going to share our history**, we shouldn't hide the ugly {laughter} like we learn about every other war. Why didn't we learn about the Civil War[land wars]? Yes. And New Zealand because there were so many of them. The tangata whenua and the Pakeha and the land, maybe we **should be learning about our own history**." - Samoan*

This storytelling could include community pop-ups where Pacific peoples practice the art of making their taonga to enable intergenerational sharing, as outlined in the talanoa below.

*"Yeah. So, I'll be just with my boy at every stop. So, say there's, like, **the Aunties, doing the lei making**, we will stop there. And **I will explain the story behind why we make this** and what it's for, like, for the dancing or, you know, for anything, basically. And then giving one to the crowd, like everyone in the crowd, making sure in eye contact to make sure that I'm keeping eye contact on every single one, so they don't get bored. Or, you know, like, you know, being so I get what someone gets bored, because they're not, like, focused on us. **So having a good story behind everything that I'm showing him [son]**." - Tokelauan/ Tongan*

There were suggestions from Pacific peoples that Te Papa could facilitate this outside their own spaces and instead come to the Pacific community to increase accessibility.

*"Oh... it'd be amazing. I was just thinking, is there a possibility that Te Papa could do a thing at the Auckland Museum but even better if they could do that thing and **base it like in Mangere?** Where all the Pacific people are. And especially, I know that's a really deprived area. And when you look at weekly income, the lowest weekly income and really high Pacific population. So I think **that will be amazing, you know, they've got a wonderful art centre there**." - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

Pacific peoples also suggested enabling Pacific peoples to be part of the curation journey and to empower them to showcase their work.

*"But maybe just to open up a. I don't know. Time schedule, **whatever it looks like to the community, where they can come and display their art?** Yeah. Open up a section where Yeah. Because, like how I said to you before, like, you know, I know some people who have created a lot of art pieces and when trying to get through the door fresh gallery, for example. **You would think it's in the heart of Otara. They would be open to displaying it but no. It was a one-year waiting list because they were displaying artisans who already are in the field.**" Niuean/Cook Islands/Samoan*

Pacific peoples want museums where their historical and contemporary stories are told authentically and in their entirety. Pacific peoples also want museums that come to the community to enable intergenerational multi-sensory interaction with taonga.

Places where Pacific peoples can interact with taonga

Pacific peoples want to be able to interact with taonga. This interaction enables connection to not just the taonga but also their family, community, and generations beyond those in the room with them. Pacific peoples identified the many different ways that they can interact with taonga and noted that being able to interact with Pacific taonga could help change perceptions of Pacific peoples.

Pacific peoples identified that museum tours were something they liked to do as they could hear from people about the different taonga in the museum.

*"I think a little bit more interaction with museum tours. I know that sounds real old school, but **I love listening to people that have that history and that knowledge instead of just standing there reading it myself.**" - Cook Islands*

Interaction that enabled connection was of particular significance to Pacific peoples. The ability to see themselves and their family in the taonga created meaningful moments that connected Pacific peoples across generations and moments.

*"I think there's a bit of nostalgia there as well. But when you're able to, like, **when I physically touch a tivaevae, for example, I think of my Nana and all the mamas sitting around in the lounge, laughing, having cups of teas, sewing this tivaevae for one of their daughter's weddings, and it's coming up. And it was just this, like, the nostalgia of that is like I just remember it being like **such a loving family kind of time.** And I don't know if I get that same feeling just from looking at the tivaevae in the picture. Yeah, yeah. But being able to physically touch the tivaevae. Like, it has more of a kind of **meaningful connection for me.**" - Cook Islands/Tongan***

*"**It's touching your history.** You're not just seeing it. You're not seeing it behind glass." - Fijian*



However, Pacific peoples were also aware that not every taonga can be touched and that some need to be preserved.

*"Yeah, this depends on how well treasured it was to you. Like if it was like something **that was 1000s of years old**, then probably not. **I'd probably be like don't touch that sort of stuff.**" - Samoan*

Connection can also be created beyond touch, with a few Collaborators noting the importance of sound and smell in creating connection.

*"I know, definitely, if there are **not just things to read**, like, definitely... **audio of that time**, or I know, it was like pūoro playing at the time that I could hear... And so I guess it takes you back, you know, **you almost get taken back to that time and that space.** And being aware of that." - Samoan/Māori/Tongan*

***"Smell is so much of a, you know.... give me some coconut! Give me some frangipani!"** - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

For Pacific peoples, interactive storytelling was not just about Pacific peoples' own connection but also about helping others understand and connect with Pacific histories. Pacific peoples see this type of connection as an opportunity to change the perception of Pacific peoples.

*"Imagine that, right? Like, you head along to an exhibition. You see the Dawn Raids exhibition. But then maybe after you've got someone talking about ways that we can, you know, change? **Because of what we've seen... ways that we can change our perspectives, especially if we're palagi.** You know, or I shouldn't say that. But, you know, but just, yeah. More... more switching of, you know... Because it's almost like you see this big exhibition, you've got all of these **different thoughts and feelings about what they evoke**, and then you go away with it, and they're kind of just... your kind of just you take them with you? But you know, if you had a **chance to kind of maybe share them or have someone facilitate the ideas that a lot of people may feel?**" - Samoan/Māori/Tongan*

Multi-model community-driven interaction creates an essential space for Pacific communities and others to connect with and share their taonga. Te Papa's language week celebrations were specifically named as one of the ways that this is already achieved.

*"You had more interactive things; I know that there was a couple of weeks ago, Te Papa... **The Niuean community put on this event** at Te Papa's first floor in the forecourt area, the big lobby area, and it was celebrating it for constitutions or celebrating Niuean culture. And it was all interactive. It's all... this is our culture. **But this is our culture, from the framework of weaving and hiapo, and there were people demonstrating a Takalo** and all of that sort of stuff; it's like that sort of thing **really helps people understand the culture**, as well as the food, obviously, the food part's massive as well. But, you know, it's a little bit harder for a museum. But you know, it's like all that, again, it's all experiences, right? ...*

...If you give people all those experiences, and you let them, you know, touch, touch, feel interact, you find engagement levels tends to go up because there are people who are experiencing something new; they're learning something new. It can only be a good thing, right?" - Niuean

Being able to interact and connect emotionally with taonga in a physical space was something that Pacific people noted was not possible in the digital space.

"Yeah, engaging you not only on an intellectual level but on an emotional level. And I think that stuff is really good. And that really has start being the future of what a museum has to offer. Because we live in the internet age, right? If I wanted to look at pictures and read text, well, that's what I got a computer for." - Niuean

Mixed types of interaction were also seen as crucial for maintaining children's interest.

"Now that I have kids, what I will say is with kids of any age, it's all about experiences; it's all about interaction. It's all about engaging in that sort of that... all that sort of forms of communication, right? Some visual, some audio, some read-write, some kinaesthetic, but I think more the kinaesthetic stuff because kids love to learn by doing. And I think the more that sort of stuff you can do, the more kids are engaged with it, and they will just love to be there." - Niuean

Pacific peoples desire museums that provide multi-model interactions with taonga that cannot be replicated in an online platform. Interaction enables an emotional connection not only to the taonga but also to the stories and communities to which the taonga is connected. At the centre of these interactive moments is the ability of Pacific peoples to connect with taonga, themselves and the wider community.

Places that educate and empower communities

Pacific peoples see the potential of museums to be places that educate and empower communities through storytelling and space-making. Museums can tell controversial stories that empower Pacific peoples and challenge other communities.

"I think it's important for us to recognise our history and all of our history. We just can't tell the things that we want to tell. Like I was saying, right? It can't just be, you know, we all go to church. We all sing, we all play guitar, and we're all great sportsmen. It can't be just that, right? Or it can't be one of these things where it sort of feels a little bit like you go in and you go, you know, this community does this, and this community does this, and this community does this. I think you really need to go, "Okay, well, let's talk about the Pacific story. Let's talk about the whole Pacific story, don't just talk about the stuff that we're proud of. Talk about the stuff that we're not super proud of as a country." Why don't we talk about what New Zealand farming did to hollow out the Phosphate? We need to tell that story. Because no one knows that story. Right?" - Niuean



Museums can also educate the broader community about New Zealand's role in the colonisation of the Pacific and climate change to prevent racism and discrimination against Pacific peoples. Educating people about Pacific peoples' pasts can help with explaining the current experiences of Pacific peoples.

"And we're gonna have climate refugees now. And we're gonna have a whole big... this is me sort of sort of like, projecting out into the future, **there's going to be a whole wave of anti-Pacific sentiment,** when we have climate refugees because people won't understand, "Oh, why are these people here? I don't understand why don't they just go live where they live? Well, the sea level rises? Well, that doesn't mean anything to them until they're actually like, you know, pulled into this as what it actually means. You know, and I think, again, **museums have to be at the forefront of that sort of stuff.** Because they're the best place to provide those experiences, you can't get those experiences in other places. No one has the funding, no one has the money. No one. No one has the space, right?" - Niuean

"So they know that we where we come from. Yeah, I think it's important, even if it's not the best past, that you still pass that on because **then kids are able to piece together why certain things are happening the way that they are.** Yeah, everyday life, when I talk to my kids about white privilege, and when you've got that in your mind, you're like, that's why that particular group behave that way. **And so it helps you also, like, navigate.**" - Samoan

This sharing of histories was inclusive of this whenua, and understanding how the colonisation of Māori has contributed to tauwiwi positioning today can help to inform everybody's knowledge.

"There is an obligation for Tau Iwi to take on our stories and our history because we have taken on theirs. And, you know, I think **there is a responsibility on them to know these stories for the land that they, you know, are here on. And, you know, and the people they live next door to, you know?** So I feel like you're right. I feel like it would change, especially if they weren't really knowing of the Dawn Raids or, you know, about colonisation and things like that. **I think it would definitely bring some empathy.** You know, a little bit more, maybe." - Samoan/ Māori/ Tongan

Interactive stories that enable talanoa about these difficult histories would provide an intersection between educating for change and interactive taonga. Pacific peoples see this as a critical site of potential for museums and wanted to leverage museums to drive national conversations that needed to happen to address discrimination in Aotearoa New Zealand.

"I guess, I know, have, like, artists talks and things like that. I've never been a part of that, but I know they have kind of, you know, others talks. But you know, if it was more **geared to social change, or social perspectives,** and especially about, you know, like you say, **racism and discrimination and inequality ...**

...because that would, that would, I feel, change a lot of people's perspectives on themselves, you know, maybe how they treat others and, you know, get to the root of a couple of issues." - Samoan/Māori/Tongan

Pacific peoples desire museums that educate and empower communities. Education should include controversial stories of New Zealand's past and present and how this has contributed to Pacific peoples' present so that both Pacific peoples and other communities are empowered to confront and disrupt difficult histories.

Places where Pacific peoples belong

Pacific peoples would like museums to be spaces that they can belong to. This feeling can be cultivated through connections to history and community.

Creating a sense of belonging for Pacific peoples is an integral part of any museum.

*"I think it's that generational thing again, in terms of that, that knowledge is able to support them in being secure in themselves. So, **knowing that they can walk in that space confidently and be like I belong here.**" - Samoan*

This sense of belonging extends to how museums can connect Pacific peoples to the museum and also this whenua.

*"Well, I would hope that it is **a space where we can see ourselves**, where we can learn about our community, our, you know, our culture and other cultures. Where we can get **a sense of pride of being part of this land** because the museum should be a reflection of the whenua that it sits on. So yeah, I think it should be a place where, you know, **people can identify and can walk away feeling more connected and uplifted.**" - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

Exhibits could contribute to this sense of belonging through intergenerational and interactive exhibits that showcase Pacific skills and stories.

*"So we would have the **Auntie's to the side who are teaching us how to make leis or the lolly necklaces.** We got the **school kids in their uniforms doing the performances.** Basically, we have... what else... we have what's something in the Pacific that's like, historic to talk about, **like our vakas, or? Yeah, yeah, we'll have it in the middle.** Yeah, So, showing us how to fish." - Tokelauan/Tongan*

A sense of home was seen as a critical aspirational feature to foster a sense of belonging. Interestingly, home was in both the Pacific and the homes that Pacific peoples have in Aotearoa New Zealand.

*"It would feel tropical. And bright, because that area's quite dull. **When I visualise it in my head... Bright and colourful. ...***



*...Like, the Pacific islands. The people are happy; they're cheerful. So you'd want almost **that feeling that you get, you know, whenever you arrive in the islands,** especially when you walk through. That's what I would want to see here. Like, I'm thinking of when you land in Rarotonga. **Feels like the islands.**" - Cook Islands*

*"Yeah, yeah, like you're home, you know? Like you're walking in... It's like you're walking into your grandma's house, and there's all the lei's all over the photos and just all the siapos and like, fala out and stuff like that, like, **you want to feel you're... like you're at home?**" - Samoan*

How ideas are communicated is an integral part of belonging, and Pacific peoples would like museums to use New Zealand Sign Language and te reo Māori.

*"That's a good question. I would make it well **firstly I would make it bilingual, even including sign language as well,** incorporating aspects of sign language for those that are deaf – **making sure that all the languages of New Zealand are included.**" - Cook Island*

Ultimately, a sense of belonging will result in Pacific peoples becoming high users of museums.

*"Yeah, I think that's what it is. **It's this sense of belonging** because once you feel that, they'll have people coming to the exhibitions, **they'll have people that will continue to come back.**" - Samoan/Māori/Tongan*

Pacific peoples desire museums that foster a sense of belonging through exhibitions and multi-lingual communication. A sense of belonging in museums will ensure that Pacific peoples return to a museum.



Summary: What Pacific peoples want museums to be

Pacific peoples desire museums that share their stories in authentic and truthful ways. Museums must also be places where people can interact with taonga and receive empowering education. Importantly, Pacific peoples want museums that foster a sense of belonging. Overall, Pacific peoples' ideal museum is a place that enables connections between communities, taonga, and stories in ways that empower and educate both Pacific and non-Pacific peoples.

Pacific peoples describe museums as...

Places to connect with taonga

Pacific peoples see museums as a place where they can connect with taonga in a variety of ways. These connections enable Pacific peoples to learn about taonga and connect with themselves, their communities, and their ancestors.

Pacific peoples engage with taonga physically, visually, intellectually, emotionally, and audibly. This connection is seen as the future of museums and, in many ways, a point of strength for museums in an increasingly digital era.

"Because the museum, I can see it. **I can touch it**, you know, like, the costumes, and you can see it, you can touch it. **There are people you can ask** if you don't know, but with the internet, you have to look everywhere. It's just easier when it's there, and you can ask people and get an answer straight away." - Samoan

"Yeah, engaging you **not only on an intellectual level** but on **an emotional level**. And I think that stuff is really good. And that really has to start **being the future of what a museum has to offer**. Because we live in the internet age, right? If I wanted to look at pictures and read text, well, that's what I got a computer for." - Niuean

"And so it's visual, but then you've **got the audio playing**, and you know, it's... **all the senses are kind of at play**. And I think, for me, definitely when there are different sounds, and visually and, you know, **it adds another layer to your experience**. It's almost like... you're there at that time." - Samoan/ Māori/ Tongan

These connections create an overall experience that enables learning and connection to one's own life. The visceral connections were highlighted as a key way of learning and understanding histories. When the connections went beyond sight, Pacific peoples reflected on how these learnings stayed with them and created a broader sense of how histories intertwine with our realities.

"So yeah, but you know, again, speaking about Te Papa, and all the things I've been and seen, they're better than other places I've been to in terms of museums, but they also have the resources to be, right? Like the scale of our war was a really good one. And that it's really easy... It would have been really easy to commemorate World War One by just a world war one exhibition with, like, you know, the uniforms that they wore, and stories of the battles and all that sort of stuff. **But they made it this whole experience. Experiential thing where you went in and you, like, dropped inside**, and there were big huge sculptures and, you know, there were like, everything was like trying to be **more visceral**, right?...**I was really emotional about it**. Like, an overwhelming sense I got going through the scale of our war was that it was just a giant waste of life." - Niuean



"Totally, you know, like, I mean... there's only so much you can... I mean, you learn stuff on the internet every day. But you know, **nothing like the actual physical, like I said, the sound, the smell, just everything about it, you know, there's something that you won't forget in a hurry.** Also, the whole experience, I guess you'd say? And not to mention you learn something. You know, that can... And that **can actually be fun, too.**" - Niuean/Māori





Summary: How Pacific peoples describe museums

Pacific peoples describe museums as spaces that facilitate a deep connection with their taonga, encompassing physical, visual, intellectual, emotional, and auditory engagement. These multi-sensory interactions serve as a vital source of strength for museums in the digital era. Instead of relying on internet searches, Pacific peoples place a higher value on exhibits that can be both seen and touched, as well as on the presence of knowledgeable staff. Consequently, immersive experiences within museums evoke powerful emotions and foster a lasting understanding of history. In this regard, the extensive resources and experiential offerings provided by museums like Te Papa are particularly appreciated by Pacific peoples.

Pacific peoples perceive museums...

Pacific peoples have both negative and positive perceptions of museums. Colonial histories carried over into contemporary practices influence Pacific peoples' perceptions of museums. Pacific peoples noted that museums felt out of touch and were boring. However, Pacific peoples also perceived museums in a positive light. Museums were seen:

In a negative light

Pacific peoples have noted that museums are colonial institutions where Pacific peoples do not belong.

*"I know that there's a there is probably an overriding perception that museums are full of old things. And that's all **mostly about looking backwards in history**. There's been.. at least when I was younger, there was always a view that **museums had a lot of palagi history in there**, you know, **or at least Western history**. There's a lot of.. yeah, Western history in there and so **my perception before I started going to Te Papa more often was one of looking at other people's history**." - Niuean*

*"White... like, probably from middle class, I'd say middle class cause they've got a bit of money. And then probably a mixture of tourists in there as well. From the Auckland region, **white middle class**." - Samoan*

It is not just the entry price that Pacific peoples consider when coming to the museum – the vendors suggest to Pacific peoples who the museum's target audience is.

*"In terms of cost, yeah, constantly rethink, I think and that comes down to even like the vendors that they have inside the museum **nobody can afford a coffee for \$5-\$6**. But the process is making sure that again, it's affordable that it's not just so **I feel like a lot of the time they create these attractions, but they're only wanting to attract a certain customer to come through the door**. So they've purposely put on vendors where people have to come and spend money but again, looking at that is so much more than just a place to make a profit as a as a money making thing, but **looking at as that it's their responsibility to hold the history and tell the history of New Zealand**." - Samoan*

Pacific peoples highlighted that these different things contribute to feeling like museums are out of touch with Pacific communities.

*I don't know. I just think, you know.. You think of a museum and you think of, you know, old white guys? Who are completely lost... **out of touch with reality kind of thing**. They **live in their own little bubble**, their own little world." - Cook Islands/Tahitian*



Museum digital collections are not the first place Pacific peoples turn to for knowledge. Instead, Pacific peoples pointed to using larger search engines.

*"We've got Google, and you can find anything on google. Yeah. So your brain like in like, when I think of how I search, I just go into a Google search type what I'm looking for. **I would never go Auckland museum (online)** and look on the website. And so it's almost like you just search on Google and Google sets out what you want to see. And you click on the results."* - Samoan

Pacific peoples perceived museums as boring for adults and children.

*"**Boring.** Yeah, that it's boring and needs improvement." - Tongan*

*"**Um a bit boring.** Honestly. Like he [son] likes to go to that earthquake place. I think that's the most exciting thing for him." - Tokelauan/Niuean*

Pacific peoples' negative perceptions of museums are that they are not the target audience for museums. Pacific peoples have described museums as out of touch and boring.

In a positive light

Pacific peoples also identified positive things about museums. Pacific peoples liked that museums were spaces to learn, reflect, and be inspired. Specifically, spaces that enabled interaction and connection were viewed positively by Pacific peoples, perceived as a way to bring family stories to life.

Museums are spaces where Pacific peoples can learn and engage with things they may not have known previously.

*"**I love the museums,** you know, with or without children. I think it's more because I love **knowledge, or just learning things that I didn't know before.** And then you know, and then you can read more into things. You know, if that makes sense? I love just how they display everything. Really, that's what catches my attention. **And I just want to learn more.** You know, **that's what they're about,** isn't it? Really to learn that and the history of things?" - Niuean/Māori*

The peaceful space within museums created an opportunity for reflection for Pacific peoples.

*"And to me that's yeah, that's what the museum is. It's a nice **peaceful space.** And then it's also a place where you can **sit and reflect.**" - Fijian*

Spaces in museums also encouraged a feeling of being creative,

*"There's some **really cool things in the gift shop, lots of educational things, resources there. I enjoy... like feeling creative.** There's so much artsy things and interactive things for kids and for adults as well. So I really liked that. **It inspires you to like, learn and get your creative mind going.**" - Cook Islands*

Pacific peoples perceived the physical space of museums positively as they could interact with taonga. However, Pacific peoples were concerned that digitisation might lead to fewer physical spaces in the future.

*I don't want museums to be like Blockbuster and just like disappear. I think they **hold great value and importance.** I understand that you can get a lot of this information online. It's so much more accessible, that **there's nothing different about being able to visit in person and have the like, the physical touch of some of the history.**" - Cook Islands/Tongan*

*But I just kind of, you know, museums... aren't museums if they're gonna take everything away and put it on the internet, you know? I mean, you can understand the convenience of it you know, and how easy it is for people. **But there's still nothing like the real deal Museum.** Seeing things up close and personal and actual just the feel of it. You know what I mean? Like, **the physicalness of it is not the same on your laptop,** or, you know, it's not the same." - Niuean/Māori*

Museums have a role to play in bringing to life family stories as they could provide a national view of a personal story. For example, family might share stories of the Dawn Raids, but museums could offer a broader perspective that the family story connects to.

*I think in **addition to what our families tell us about what happened in the past,** because the way that our family tells us is just telling stories, they're not showing us what that story looks like. So **the museum kind of supplements, their stories, like it puts it into real life.** - Cook Islands*

Museums can also fill gaps in family histories. Colonisation intentionally erased Pacific peoples' connections to their pasts, but museums have a role to play in reconnecting Pacific peoples.

*But there are some things or **some histories that our parents or families don't know,** but we **find out in the museum.**" - Cook Islands*

Pacific peoples describe museums in a positive light as spaces where they can physically visit to learn, reflect, and be creative. Connecting with taonga is seen as a positive and vital part of the museum as this enables Pacific peoples to bring to life their family stories and build on their own knowledge.



Summary: How Pacific peoples perceive museums

Pacific peoples hold both negative and positive perceptions of museums. They view museums negatively as colonial institutions that feel out of touch and exclude them. This perception is influenced by the dominance of Western history and a lack of representation. Moreover, affordability and the targeting of specific audiences contribute to the feeling of exclusion. However, museums are seen in a positive light as spaces for learning, reflection, and inspiration. They provide opportunities for interaction, creativity, and the bringing to life of family stories. The physical space of museums is valued, but concerns exist regarding the potential loss of physical experiences due to digitisation. Ultimately, museums play a vital role in reconnecting Pacific peoples with their cultural heritage and filling gaps in family histories, offering a national perspective that complements personal narratives.

Pacific peoples are satisfied that museums enable...

Entertainment for children

Pacific peoples articulated the satisfaction children get from interacting with a wide variety of museum exhibits. These included the natural world and children-specific exhibitions.

"Yeah, **I don't think there are many parts that the girls find boring** actually in the museum. They actually like comb through every section like **they love the earthquake house** that's there. That's one of their favourites because you get to sit there, and y'know, it's a simulation of what an earthquake would feel like, but the girls love the museum." - Samoan

"Yeah, kind of exhibitions that they love seeing when we're there. So they've had, like, **a butterfly one, which the girls loved**. They got to see all the different butterflies. But yeah, we try to go to most of their interactive ones. I think the stuff that kids can touch, feel and play with is where they learn the most." - Samoan

"There was some sort of dinosaur. I'm sure there was **the dinosaur display** that I took my boy to down there. **He loved it**. But mind you, because he was into dinosaurs. It was a lot more interactive. The screens... they've been... I'm pretty sure there was a lot more to do with the screen, like laptops where you could actually go and read, and they had a lot, you know, had a few activities happening in the Auckland Museum. So **that was kind of cool**." - Cook Islands

"I had discovered this place, and this was, you know, like, oh, the late 90s. I discovered this place called the **weird and wonderful** at the Auckland museum children's area. And, you know, it was **a lovely free thing that I could take my daughter to, and she would just be happy for hours**. And, you know, we're having these conversations about the insects, birds and, you know, the natural world, and they had computers there! It was **one of our favourite places to go**, you know because it was free. And it was educational. And she loved it. And there were lots of places for me to sit down. So yeah, so that was the biggest experience with museums that I've had as with her as a little girl, taking her, you know, like, at least once a week to the Auckland Museum to that weird and wonderful area. Yeah." - Cook Islands/Tahitian

Importantly, the museum is a free space to bring children to.

"Yes. It's the **craziest thing, aye, when you think it's free**. It's a free activity for you to bring your kids, and it takes like half a day to get through the museum with them. It's actually a really good place to waste time with children." - Samoan

Pacific peoples are satisfied with the free interactive entertainment the museums provide as they enable a chance to connect with children and build memories.



Summary: Pacific peoples satisfactions with museums

Pacific peoples highly appreciate the engaging and interactive exhibits offered by museums as entertainment for children. These exhibits, including those focused on the natural world and specifically designed for children, are enjoyed thoroughly by the younger audience. The availability of interactive elements, such as simulations, touchable objects, and screens, adds to the appeal. Subsequently, Pacific peoples view museums as valuable spaces for fostering connections, creating lasting memories, and providing educational experiences for children..

Pacific peoples visit museums for...

Pacific peoples visit museums for their families and to seek knowledge. These two reasons are not necessarily separate but rather feed into each other, as Pacific peoples take their families to museums in order to expand their knowledge base.

Their family

Pacific peoples see museums as somewhere to take their families, including family visiting from overseas. Different parts of the museum offer different things for different audiences. Interestingly, parents see the Pacific space as somewhere they can take their children to connect with their heritage but also enjoy taking them to see the other parts of the museum that interest their children.

*"But then, for us as PI's, we love taking them to the Pacific Islands section of the museum. We kind of show them around there about **where they are, where they're from, where their histories from**, and then we're lucky enough that my cousin's got a photo in the museum. **So we show them Aunty's photo** that's there. But yeah, I think, for our girls, Moana has played a big part in them wanting to learn about their culture. **...The dinosaurs purely because the girls are just interested in the dinosaurs, but then the P. I part is because that's our history.** That's our background. And **it's cool to show the kids** kind of what it used to look like." - Samoan*

*I'll just merely say my daughter she kind of motivates me, you know, and she motivates me in the way where **I want her to learn where her... you know where we come from.** - Tokelauan/ Tongan*

*"If I had visitors come over from Fiji, yes. If I had people come out here outside, Oh, yeah. Overseas, that is something I would take them to because, again, **I would take them to where the Fijian things were** because that'd be the only thing of interest to them." - Fijian*

Museums are spaces that Pacific peoples visit with their families in order to expand their education and also offer different experiences.

*"Yeah, I want my... I want my kids and not just my kid,s like nieces and nephews and everything.....just be good people in this world. And I feel like the more broader their mind is, and **the more broader that education is**, and you know, that... **the more knowledge** that they have with the world around them, I feel like one they'll be able to **not only survive but succeed in their adult life.** That's what I hope. Yeah. So that there **really is the main goal.**" - Niuean/Cook Islands*

*So what interests us and museums? My husband and I love history, and **we love taking our kids to different places** so that they can **get a wide experience in life.** Samoan*

Pacific peoples visit museums to connect taonga, educate and provide different experiences for their families

To seek knowledge

Pacific peoples visit museums in order to seek knowledge about the Pacific and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand. This activity includes the opportunity to engage with Māori history as part of Pacific history.

"Yeah, probably, at least for me as a Pacific person, the **history of Pacific people in modern New Zealand**, then the history of Pacific people and then New Zealand, the broader New Zealand context. I mean, it's a painful history. **It's certainly one that does need to be told.** Y'know, **learning about Māori culture**, and then, you know, all the other stuff that's around around that sort of thing." - Niuean

"So, you know, like, if it's **something that sparks any of our interests, then it's something that we definitely would prioritise to go.** Yeah. I guess, you know, like around **ANZAC Day**, we wanted to go because of the ANZAC exhibition, you know, what's going on? You know, what's going on globally or, you know, nationally, like we were around there for the **Matariki exhibitions**, and I know a lot was going on in Te Papa." - Samoan/ Māori/ Tongan

Knowledge seeking about history is not limited to Pacific history but is about a wider understanding of global history and how it shapes their thinking today.

"For me, because **I love learning about history.** That type of thing. **And knowing how things came about or where people think, or where they came from,** or just history about, I suppose different objects, different cultures, those things interests me." - Cook Islands

"I've always had an interest in history; that stuff always has interested me. I talk about other people's stories for me. **Other people's stories are always interesting.** Like, like learning about... learning about someone's journey to New Zealand, **learning about like different animals and plants.** And I've always had an interest in that type of thing." - Niuean

Knowledge seeking is about learning something at the museum that Pacific peoples did not know before. Sometimes this practice was specifically connected to a project, whereas other times, it was happenstance.

"I'm just trying to think now the last time I was there. **I found the Māori area interesting.** Because I don't know about it. Because I'm not a Māori. That's fine. That's not... but I think I found that more engaging, you know, just reading about the different, I suppose, the history. Because I don't know much, it's **always interesting to learn something about something here that I don't know much about.**" - Cook Islands

"Because my kids and their **schools have projects** and stuff, we have to go down there to look at stuff and write notes and everything. So we just take a trip down there; I don't mind it." - Samoan



Pacific peoples also seek out knowledge in the sciences and saw doing this in the museum as a way to grow a greater appreciation of the sciences in their children.

*"Yeah, I think maybe with the older one, with the older one, I think I think it probably did, yeah, probably **gave her a greater appreciation of the science side of things.** Yeah. And my husband, who stepped in. He was an entomologist that he studied insects." - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

Pacific peoples go to museums to seek out knowledge about Pacific and non-Pacific taonga that are interesting to them or driven by a specific purpose like schoolwork. Often these two purposes intersect, as Pacific peoples take their children or family members to learn about something new.



Summary: Pacific peoples visits to museums

Pacific peoples visit museums with their families to seek knowledge, expand their education, and connect with their heritage. They view museums as spaces to explore different cultures, learn about history, and appreciate the sciences. Seeking knowledge extends beyond Pacific history to encompass a broader understanding of global history. Through museum visits, Pacific peoples aim to nurture the growth and education of their children, promoting their success and broader perspectives in life. Ultimately, museums serve as valuable spaces for Pacific peoples to seek knowledge, engage with diverse aspects of culture, and enrich the education of their families.

Pacific peoples identify barriers to museums that are...

Pacific peoples identified physical, communication, cost, and time barriers to engaging with museums. The general atmosphere and behaviour expectations in museums can operate to exclude Pacific peoples.

Physical

Museums feel uncomfortable to Pacific peoples and can be overwhelming, particularly given cultural norms around behaviours in museums.

Pacific peoples identified that museums are similar to other institutions that operate to exclude them, as racism factors into how they are organised.

*"Another one of those kind of **ivory tower institutions**, isn't it? Yes. That Pacific peoples don't feel that. Well, **I don't feel comfortable in as a Pacific person**. Yes. Yeah. I feel ignorant walking in. Yeah, there's that **racism factor** as well. Yes. Yeah. **We're talking white middle-class people holding all the knowledge.**" - Cook Islands*

The value base and social perception of museums mean that Pacific peoples identify social norms in museums that conflict with their own. The example below describes how people learn to demonstrate that social expectations of not touching do not align with Pacific practices of learning.

*Because I feel like the major part, like you're kind of like, **don't run around in here, don't touch anything**, like the way they learned is like, touch and feel. - Samoan*

The process of visiting a museum can be overwhelming, from locating a carpark to getting inside the museum. Pacific peoples perceive that there are procedures for visiting the museum that they may not understand and that this can be overwhelming.

*Yes. I think there's not enough parking. I think of when the times that I have gone in there recently. It's... **It's confusing**. Yeah. Where do I stand? Where do I line up? Where do I? Yeah. And it just seems a bit **overwhelming to me**. - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

Communication driven

Pacific peoples identify a significant lack of communication about museums in advertising and within museums. This lack of communication leads to Pacific peoples being unsure of what is on in the museum, the costs of going to the museum, and also raises concerns about the accessibility of information within the museum.



How museums promote themselves was identified as a significant communication barrier for Pacific peoples. Pacific people noted a lack of communication contributing to less knowledge about what was being displayed at the museum.

*Sorry to add on of why I don't go to the museum is because I don't know... all I know is what I've just told you, **but I don't know what's current. I don't know what's going on. If they have workshops, or if that's even a thing. Yeah, so I don't know what's going on there. I don't think that reaches out here. I don't see it. I don't hear people talking about it.***" - Niuean/Cook Islands/Samoan

Museums promote their exhibitions, but this is not usually focussed on Pacific collections.

*"And I guess even with **the promotional part, they could do better.** I can't remember ever a time of anything Pacific being promoted. I can definitely remember terracotta soldiers from China."* - Niuean/Cook Islands

Communication once Pacific peoples are inside the museum was also seen as lacking. In particular, Pacific peoples were unsure about the price of different aspects of the museum.

*"That's another thing that I feel comes with museums, like nobody really knows how much something costs. And, you know, **is one part free and there's a specific exhibition do you have to pay for that? So that stuff's not really clear.**"* - Niuean/Cook Islands

How ideas are communicated in museums is not mindful of different audiences. Pacific peoples encouraged the use of multiple New Zealand languages and were concerned about the accessibility of information.

*"I'm thinking about my kids and how they'll go in, and then they'll stand in front of, like, a sign, and they'll say... **Like the five-year-old or three-year-old who can't read yet... "Mummy, what does this say?"** Like, think about the different audiences because you're normally going to come through with a couple that can't read. And maybe **having the information in different forms, just like how we think of doing bilingual and Te Reo, maybe we should think picture form. I think it's making it accessible for all, and then it doesn't...yeah. It's at different age levels. It's the different backgrounds when you speak English. Down to disabilities, you know?"*** - Samoan

Cost driven

Pacific peoples have identified that monetary and travel costs are a barrier to visiting museums and that it is particularly relevant as the cost of living rises.

There were cost aspects that the museum could control, such as exhibition costs.

"Yeah, I mean, but the thing is, the really sad thing about it is when they do bring things in... you pay. Well, I'm sorry, **not everybody can afford that.**" - Fijian

However, there were also costs outside of the museum's control, such as travel.

"That's the other thing is the location of the museum. The museum is all the way for us in here in Auckland, and you already know it's all the way in the city. Yeah, I wish they would put one here in South Auckland was easier for us to visit to go to because it's so far to travel all the way to the city. **Petrol costs are not that cheap nowadays, you know.** So it'd be nice to bring it up to or at least build another one out here and stuff and display a bit more Pacific stuff in there... artefacts." - Cook Islands

The overarching cost of living crisis also means that Pacific peoples were starting to view the museum as a luxury as they opted to purchase essentials instead.

"Yeah, that's pretty dumb. Because you look at look at the cost of especially during these days where the **living costs are bloody expensive** as to **try and do things for your kids that are free. That's [museums] not.** Yeah, that's my thing. That's dumb." - Samoan

"Oh, yeah, of course. **The price of gas** and just everything you know, [the museum] all the ways in One Tree Hill. But **get a lot of us don't have access to you know, like, to transport,** like when we do, to do like our essential things and like, **just getting up to Pack n Save to get food** and Yeah. And a little errands and doctors and kids like that." - Fijian/ Māori

Time driven

Pacific peoples have identified another cost as time – finding themselves time-poor, visiting the museum slips down the list of priorities.

"For me personally. **It's just I've just had a really busy year.** Again. Yeah. And this is not an excuse. But yeah, I mean, shucks, we only just moved into our new house in May this year. Everything before that. Yeah. Everything before that. We were planning and, and saving and, you know, preparing for the move. And then, when we moved down, work has been super busy. So yeah, basically, **I just haven't really had the time to go to the museum.**" - Niuean/Cook Islands

However, when some Pacific Collaborators reflected on this, they shared that they would like more time, as time would enable them to do things like visiting the museum.

"So my biggest one is time, and I want time, so I'm not doing anything like next year. I'm manifesting this for myself, and time is gonna be free for me." - Tokelauan/Tonga





Summary: Pacific peoples' barriers to visiting museums

Pacific peoples have identified a number of barriers to visiting museums. These range from the influence of museums, such as communication and physical spaces, to wider cost of living factors and time constraints. Cost is a significant barrier for many, with exhibition costs and travel costs, are an additional financial burden when weighed against other essential expenses. Pacific peoples also find themselves time-poor due to family commitments or work demands which limit available leisure time to allow visiting museums.

Pacific peoples believe museums can...

Pacific peoples are hopeful for museums and see their potential to be spaces where Pacific peoples can thrive and contribute. However, there is work to be done, and Pacific peoples have several ideas for how museums can become places that enable connections between communities, taonga, and stories to empower and educate both Pacific and non-Pacific peoples. Each of these ideas seeks to create a deeper understanding and appreciation for Pacific taonga while breaking down the existing barriers that prevent accessibility concerns.

Facilitate a connection between museums and Pacific peoples

Pacific peoples identified numerous ways to build connections between Pacific peoples and museums. In particular, this could be done by working with community or by letting Pacific communities lead to help create direct connections to community.

Community is seen as the cornerstone of Pacific peoples' way of life. Therefore, it follows that to increase Pacific engagement with museums, there would need to be a concerted effort to increase museums' work with Pacific communities.

*"I mean, if the museum is looking at attracting more Pacific people or more people, one way of doing that is **by working together with our community**, not working in silos or expecting them to come if you want something to be done in the community, **you have to go and work with them, connect with them**. It's like a village having a village system. And that's always been successful with us. Everything with that is all about our community or working with other people." - Cook Islands*

Established relationships can speed this process up, so letting Pacific people lead in museum spaces is one way to continue to build strong relationships between community and the museum.

*"So yeah, I think **one, get our people up there**. Like, **give us the space to be able to lead**? That's what I think. And actually allow us to lead because I sometimes find with some people that are Non-Pacific, Non-Māori, they learn our ways, and they think they have to lead that for us? **Give us the room and space, we actually can do it, and we can prove it**. Because we've had years and years. It's in our blood, our navigation, our stories of how we are as people... that's perfect leadership stories! We can do it." - Samoan*

These types of leadership roles or community embedded within museums mean that Pacific communities know who to contact and touch base with if they want to see something in the museum or plan to visit a museum.

*Yeah, I guess, as well just occurred to me that, you know, **thinking about my auntie working there...** it would be great as well to have Pacific people available? You know, **somehow letting people know that they could contact them**. If you have any questions about things, maybe special events, have them on the ground so that they can kind of walk you through things....*

"You know, walking tours through the exhibition that you can book. Or you know, how they have their head trains. And you know, tell you about... Yeah, that kind of thing. Yeah, **there's nothing like that personal one-on-one touch**, is there? Someone actually walking you through and telling you some things that aren't written up. There is a story behind this because we all want to hear the story. Yeah, like, these, like hidden gems say we all want to hear those things." - Cook Islands/Tahitian

However, it is important to establish guiding principles for these community relationships. That is, if a museum dedicates resources to the Pacific community, it is then Pacific peoples reciprocal and relational responsibility to ensure that Pacific communities attend and share at the museum. A clear process will ensure that conversations continue and that Pacific peoples begin to see museums as spaces where meaningful relationships are possible.

"I think it's **a reciprocal thing**, I reckon. And so, yes, their responsibility because they hold the resourcing of it, but **also our responsibility as a community to be able to share it and engage in it**. So kind of the va there, in terms of ensuring that there are **conversations going on, and ensuring that things are shared, and they'll be shared safely and held safely**." - Samoan

There may also be an opportunity to build commercial relationships with Pacific communities, which could encourage more Pacific peoples to museums.

"But the main thing, the main reason why I go there [Mangere art gallery] is because of the cafe because either **they have like their Tongan coffee**. They have **the person who runs the cafe is Tongan**, and then they have, like, the Tongan pies. They sometimes, they even sell coffee like from Tonga that you can buy. They even baked like or how you like **coconut bread taro bread loaves** that you can actually take home. **And that and I love that**." - Tongan

The connection between museums and Pacific peoples is multifaceted. Pacific peoples have identified some direct actions that museums can take, including employing more Pacific peoples and enabling Pacific peoples to lead spaces, so that there are direct lines between Pacific communities and those working in museums. Pacific peoples also suggested commercial relationships between museums and Pacific businesses. Importantly, this connection is grounded in the idea of the va and ensuring that both communities engage with each other in regular and genuine ways.

Provide a more nuanced experience of Pacific taonga

Pacific peoples would like museums to offer access to a deeper understanding of the Pacific taonga in museums by expanding what they share about Pacific taonga, their Pacific collection and showcasing Pacific peoples through time with a focus on Pacific peoples' knowledge of the ocean.

Whilst there are Pacific taonga within the museum, Pacific peoples identified that not enough is being shared about the taonga. Pacific peoples want to see more shared about the taonga in ways that add a depth of understanding beyond what the taonga is and the island it came from.



"I like I'd like that it's there and that it's in the museum and, and it's being acknowledged and stuff, but it's not being acknowledged to its full potential. Like, **there's so much you could do and explain about all our Polynesian artefacts.** You know, like, there's so many things that we can talk about and can go into depth with, but it's not being talked about because **there's no one there to talk about it.**" - Niuean

"No... well... see like **you've got this rope making.** Yeah. Okay. **What was the plant? What were they using? What's the rope made out of?** I mean, it's all very well saying rope making." - Fijian

The deepening of understanding of Pacific taonga extends to the different Pacific nations represented. Pacific peoples want to see collections that reflect the wider Pacific.

"When I go to the Auckland Museum, there's so many things about New Zealand and overseas but little... and **quite a few things about the main Pacific countries like Samoa... Tonga... Cook Islands... But very little things about the little countries like Tokelau or Tuvalu or Kiribati.** So be great to see a lot their history is being displayed in the museum as well. - Cook Islands

The issue of who Pacific peoples are and how they are represented in museums was a frequent point of the talanoa. Pacific peoples wanted museums to represent Pacific peoples in ways that captured all of who they are and what they bring to Aotearoa New Zealand. While navigation history is incredibly important, the radical collectivism showcased by the Tongan community could also serve as important taonga for Pacific peoples.

"I think I engaged with them because of my culture. But it doesn't make me want to go to the museum. Yeah, like, I think they are very old. And a lot of the stuff at the museum is old, you know, like, versus, like, if you like, now I feel like everything is like it needs to be interactive, or needs to be sort of vibrant, and like to **capture, in essence, who Pacific Islanders are like, how have we transitioned through, you know, from rowing on a boat to now, like, running 1000 People parades** with, you know, riding cars." - Samoan

"But the ocean, like **anything to do with the ocean, is very important for our people.** So any history that surrounds the ocean in history... including like the travel between the countries, would be really good to see that in the museum. And whatnot, I don't see that being displayed in the museum or being told in the museum. **I think that would attract our older generation** like to show them the traditional things around the ocean." - Cook Islands

Use social media for advertising to Pacific peoples

Pacific peoples suggest museums communicate what is on in their exhibitions through social media...

*"Yeah, but I definitely think there needs, like, more sort of the social aspect of or like **social media aspect to actually advertise** in the sense that, like, hey, we've got an online space too." - Samoan*

... which could increase Pacific visitation rates.

*"Perhaps if they start putting some of those stuffs on social media? Because a lot of people are on **social media**. Maybe they'll get **a lot more interest from the people**." - Cook Islands*

Pacific peoples have highlighted that social media could help raise awareness in Pacific communities about what is on in the museum. This activity can include targeted advertising and also the use of Pacific community pages.

Increase their variety in taonga

Pacific peoples suggested more variety in how taonga are presented in museums. This included refreshing the exhibits more often, communicating stories in multiple ways, and changing how people can access museums.

The perception that museums are static could be disrupted by refreshing galleries more often.

*"But you know, **at least like changing it up a bit** and also, like I said, bringing new things like something new to kind of attract people there." - Cook Islands /Tongan*

Pacific peoples also commented on the importance of multiple ways to interact and learn about taonga.

*"So, for me, I can read boring words, like I actually enjoy that. So, whether it's a touchscreen, that kind of like that **visual aids**. For me, personally, it doesn't make too much of a difference. Or like **listening to audio**. I think that's like handy as well, but just to give your eyes rest. But for the family, I think it needs to be short, sharp messaging. **Interactive**, you know, **different** voices, not just that monotone, kinda like just different ways of getting the messages to the visitors, There needs to be a bit more like excitement and just **like some kind of liveliness** to it." - Cook Islands /Tongan*

Perhaps one of the bigger suggestions around changing how taonga are interacted with was the suggestion of a school holiday programme. The school holiday programme was envisioned as a space where children could interact consistently and deeply with the taonga while having fun.

*"I guess so they could say like a day, like a whole thing around the museum could do something like **a school holiday program?** ...for example, you've got like **five days there where you'll be able to do the museum and portions while having fun and learning** and that kind of thing for the children." - Cook Islands /Tongan*



Deliver on transformative shifts

Pacific peoples highlighted that a Pacific Museum built from Pacific ontologies could be created for transformative shifts. Pacific peoples also suggested moving away from user pays to free entry or targeted free days.

When asked about transformative practices, Pacific peoples highlighted that a Pacific Museum could be created as it would reflect Pacific peoples from design to implementation.

*I think they need to create, perhaps, a Pacific Museum on its own. **So as soon as I walk in from the entrance, you feel that Pacific vibe and that Pacific spirit.** and you see all the Pacific Arts and Crafts at the entrance. There are some stones, you know, when you go on an important platform, I don't know about your country, but for us in the Cook Islands. And when they do an investiture for new kings or new chiefs. For each island, they go on this platform and on that platform is laid with like different stones, but very important stones and they mean something. So it'd be nice to have those stones, I don't know to represent different countries at the entrance, **but it makes you feel like you coming home you're coming home and that home is in Aoteroa as well.** You don't have to go back to your home. But it's right here in New Zealand. **I believe that the museum, you know, has that, how do you say that taonga that power to give that to our people.** - Cook Islands*

Museums could restructure their pricing plan to be free or target specific communities with free entry on different days.

*"What would they be interested in? Yeah, it would have to be free. **Don't be charging me any money to get in there!** It would have to be free. Yeah. **Or at least very, very, you know, affordable.** Yeah. If they're going to put a price on it very, very affordable. **And maybe have some like, some prizes,** like I mean, like free tickets. That's what I mean. If you are going to put an expense, get some free tickets going. And target them towards, you know, people who aren't visiting." - Cook Islands/Tahitian*

*"So yeah, I think cost is a big thing that needs to be looked at with these museums, especially because most of them are Council funded. They're getting a lot of money from Council, so I know back in the day when I was **there used to be free Council days at MOTAT,** which they've taken away. So used to like free entry for South Auckland for North... West... a particular month um, but they've taken that away since." - Samoan*

Rethink Physical Spaces

Pacific peoples suggested rethinking physical spaces in museums, like utilising more natural features to create a more calming environment or having larger spaces filled with sound and light.

*Finding some way to make it kind of **a more calming environment.** So maybe putting **more natural features** around so that it's not such a, you know, like... I'm thinking about the museum... Te Papa probably does this better, but yeah. So it's not so kind of, you know, I can't think of the word but not... natural? You know...*

*...they have some **water sound and maybe even water flowing... and greenery around there.** - Cook Island/Tahitian*

The aesthetic of museums was seen as something to address. Enabling larger light-filled spaces could improve the aesthetic of museums. Interestingly, yet again, the idea of cultural performance and singing and dancing was raised but this time in relation to physical space.

*"For one, they **need to build it bigger.** It's really small. You got to walk up hundreds of stairs to even get there. They need to just make it bigger cause **their stuff is kind of cramped?** One on top of the other and things like that. Yeah. They just need to expand it. Make it bigger." - Samoan*

*"I like **cultural performances later. Singing or music** and just that kind of stuff. Like, they'll make it more interesting. Yeah." - Fijian/Māori*

*"It's quite dark in there. I don't know why it's so dark. In there, but it probably needs to be more. I don't know why. Yeah. Why is it dark in there? It's a huge space. It should be more white. Like it's like you feel very claustrophobic in there, and it's probably all their lighting and the **dark walls, and that's not very Pacific feel.** Yeah, probably be better if it was **just brightened up.**" - Tongan*



Summary: Pacific peoples believe museums can

Pacific peoples have several suggestions to make museums more attractive and accessible to their community. These suggestions range from hiring more Pacific peoples in leadership positions, expanding their collections, using social media to spread information, reimagining physical spaces with nature, sound and light, creating a dedicated Pacific Museum and offering free or discounted admission dates. Each of these ideas seeks to create a deeper understanding and appreciation for Pacific taonga while breaking down the existing barriers that prevent accessibility concerns.

Discussion

The literature review shows that museums and Pacific peoples have shared a tense history informed by differential power dynamics and racist tropes. However, the sector has made significant changes in its approach and indicates a willingness to learn and develop further. Moving forward, museums need to consider how they store and display Pacific taonga and how they engage with and maintain the interest of Pacific audiences.

Pacific peoples highlighted a desire to engage with museums. This wish was particularly evident in the survey data, where it became clear that all levels of users were interested in museums. This finding is a significant insight, as it challenges assumptions that Pacific peoples do not wish to engage with museums and instead highlights that Pacific peoples' desire to interact with museums is limited by structures both internal and external to the museum. Importantly, Pacific peoples are highly interested in Pacific collections but also interested in museum collections more broadly.

Within Te Papa's sphere of influence, the top two barriers to visiting the museum identified by Pacific peoples in the survey were not knowing what was going on and being too far to travel. Talanoa provided solutions to these barriers, including targeted advertising and communication to Pacific peoples, and bringing exhibitions to Pacific communities. Te Papa's reports⁸⁰ refer to pop-up exhibitions, suggesting that there is already a structure in place to develop and deliver Pacific-specific pop-up exhibitions. Importantly, Pacific-specific does not mean only Pacific taonga but, instead, exhibitions displayed in spaces and places that are easy for Pacific peoples to access. These pop-up exhibitions could also be leveraged to educate more communities about the Pacific story and contribute to the desire by Pacific communities for the New Zealand public to better understand the Pacific story, our current concerns, and how history has contributed to Pacific peoples' reality today.

There remain communication barriers that will need to be addressed by museums if they are to serve Pacific audiences better. Perhaps the most telling finding was a lack of awareness of what was happening at museums in both the survey (digital space) and talanoa (digital and physical space). Pacific peoples shared that they were often unaware of what was happening at museums because their neighbourhoods were not targeted for advertising campaigns. This neglect creates a perception amongst Pacific peoples that museums have often already decided who their audience will be in communicating exhibitions – and it is not Pacific peoples. Moving forward, the normalising of Pacific peoples as a priority museum audience will improve Pacific audience engagement in museums.

During talanoa, when Pacific peoples were shown digital spaces, they became excited about the potential uses of digital taonga. These uses included sharing the images with family and finding the names of plants for which they knew Pacific but not Latin names. Te Papa's internal audience data reaffirms this, as Pacific peoples who do engage with the online space find it useful overall. In one particularly memorable talanoa, a family member was identified in the photos of Niue during the 1990s. These connections to the museum via the digital space were not known prior to the research.

80. Such as Te Pūrongo ā Tau 2020/21 and Te Pūrongo ā Tau 2018/19

Still the excitement from exploring the space during talanoa suggests that intentionally leveraging the digital space in future programming could expand Pacific peoples' engagement with Te Papa's digital platform.

Furthermore, within the talanoa, it became clear that Pacific peoples see an opportunity for Te Papa to become a space where stories of Pacific peoples can be told to enhance understanding of tapu topics and Pacific peoples' pursuit of justice. This storytelling could be in both the physical and digital spaces. One talanoa suggested a talanoa space where Te Papa could share Pacific taonga, explain its significance, invite other experts and community members to speak, and open up talanoa for how this taonga shapes Pacific peoples' experiences today. Although the talanoa did not mention it, these could be modelled on the Lagi Maamas Pacific art talanoa.⁸¹ This exciting proposal could create the dynamic, nuanced, and interactive moments that Pacific peoples have asked for. This model would also help build connections with Te Papa across the community, as they would not need to physically visit Te Papa to connect with the museum and its taonga.

Importantly, as identified in the literature, this research reaffirms the importance of displaying, storing, and collecting Pacific taonga in mana-enhancing and nuanced ways. In particular, Pacific peoples have renewed calls for a more nuanced understanding of Pacific peoples both here and in the region. This call is accompanied by a desire to see Pacific stories told in ways that empower Pacific peoples and non-Pacific communities to support movements for justice for Pacific peoples. Within the talanoa, it also became clear that the telling of Pacific stories should be engaged with in authentic and safe ways. Part of change may mean changing how taonga are presented and the labelling that occurs around taonga.

When asked to build museums from scratch within the talanoa, many Pacific peoples started at a point of relationship. Pacific peoples' desire to be connected to both taonga and museums. This connection can be fostered through different methods such as co-collection, community events, and careful consideration of how Pacific stories are told and engaged with. Being cognisant of how Pacific stories are told offers an opportunity to foster the sense of belonging the Pacific peoples identified as important when it comes to museums. Co-collection was highlighted as a promising practice in the literature and is a practice that the Pacific team at Te Papa have been successfully engaging with for some time. Co-collection provides a solution to some of the concerns raised by Pacific peoples, as not only will their taonga be stored and displayed in museums, but Pacific peoples will play a key role in determining what the taonga is and how the stories attached to those taonga are told. A recent example is the Manalagi project's work with Te Papa to collect and tell stories of Pacific MVPFAFF+ (Pacific LGBTQIA+). This co-collection project empowers Pacific MVPFAFF+ communities to determine what is important to them whilst also providing further nuance and diversity to the story of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand, today.

Pacific peoples see museums to be places where relevant stories are shared by the community for the community. Importantly, Pacific peoples also see museums as living spaces where they can interact, engage and have emotional and authentic connections with taonga and museums spaces. However, there remain barriers to Pacific audiences accessing museums. The challenge remains how museums will rise up to meet the needs and aspirations of Pacific peoples who entrust museums with the care of their taonga. Notably, this report would be useful to help museums rethink their relationship with Pacific audiences. It is clear from the talanoa and the survey that Pacific peoples wish to engage with all the museum has to offer and that it will take an all-of-museum and whole-of-sector approach for museums in Aotearoa New Zealand to become places that are worthy of taonga storage and display whilst also being spaces that Pacific peoples can readily access.

81. See: <https://www.lagi-maama.com/>.



Strategies for Change

Te Papa has an opportunity to develop a time-bound and measurable strategic plan for increasing engagement with Pacific audiences. This section emphasises the need for understanding Pacific peoples' identities, coordination with Pacific teams, and partnerships with other museums.

Strategies for change

Te Papa has an opportunity to develop a time-bound and measurable strategic plan for increasing the engagement and relationship with potential and actual Pacific audiences. The strategies outlined below are based on the report and provide a beginning point for Te Papa to develop a Pacific audiences strategic plan. Time-bound strategies will ensure a focus on delivery. Measurable outcomes will provide a way to keep track of progress and encourage opportunities for adjustment if necessary. It is recommended that in five years Te Papa engages a Pacific evaluation consultation team to measure the impact and outcomes of their strategies.

These strategies should be implemented with an understanding of the nuances and complexities of Pacific peoples' identities and experiences. These strategies should also be anchored in Pacific conceptions of relationships and connection. Notably, while there are Pacific teams within Te Papa and the wider museum sector, their role in implementing these strategies should come with increasing levels of coordination and resourcing. Audience teams should engage with Pacific teams but not leave it to Pacific teams to deliver the programming unless the Pacific team is further resourced to do so.

Networking strategy

There is little research on Pacific audiences, and Te Papa has the opportunity to lead a national conversation on better engagement with Pacific peoples. Notably, some of the strategies may be better implemented in partnership with other museums to share costs and maximise impact across the country.

Year One

- Te Papa calls together museums across Aotearoa New Zealand, to share and discuss report findings.

Year Two

- Develop a national plan with key deliverables at the gathering with clear milestones and measurements to increase Pacific audience engagement across the sector.

Years Three-Five

- National programming for Pacific peoples delivered in partnership with other museums.

Marketing strategy

Pacific peoples consistently commented that they were unaware of what was happening in museums. Te Papa can address this with a targeted advertising campaign for Pacific peoples. Often, Pacific peoples mentioned using social media to grow awareness of what was happening in museums.

Year One

- Establish partnerships with Pacific-specific media outlets to advertise Te Papas offerings.
- Identify ten key suburbs for advertising that would reach a Pacific audience.
- Identify five key Pacific social media influencers that can be utilised in marketing to Pacific audiences.

Year Two

- Engage or work with a Pacific media company to develop a Pacific-specific media campaign that utilises and builds on the identified potential sites of Pacific audiences

Programming Strategy

Te Papa should consider the opportunity to develop and deliver Pacific-specific pop-up exhibitions, including space for talanoa about the taonga and how they impact Pacific peoples today. Pop-up exhibitions provide an opportunity to address time, cost and travel concerns outlined in the report. Te Papa has utilised pop-up travelling exhibitions in the past, and initiating one with a Pacific-specific audience focus will help to increase Pacific audience engagement.

Years One-Two

- Resource and work with the Pacific collections team to design one Pacific-specific pop-up exhibition.
- Identify five key sites (including in the regions) for Pacific communities to host the pop-up exhibitions.
- Resource and work with the Pacific collections team and/or a Pacific provider to develop a bi-monthly on-site Te Papa pop-ups that 'brings to life' into current taonga on display through talanoa, arts and performance.

Years Three-Five

- Deliver an initial Pacific-specific pop-up exhibition.
- Engage a Pacific evaluation consultation team to measure the impact and outcomes of a Pacific-specific exhibition with key learnings for the next exhibition.
- Design an additional pop-up exhibition for delivery within Pacific neighbourhoods (not necessarily Pacific content) for the following year.

Digital Strategy

Pacific peoples who do engage with Te Papa's digital platforms are generally satisfied. However, there is still interest in further developing Te Papa's digital platforms.



Years One-Two

- Resource and work with the Pacific collections team and/or a Pacific provider to partner with the community for five 'educate to empower' digital stories that focus on an empowerment narrative for Pacific and non-Pacific communities.
- Resource and work with the Pacific collections team and/or a Pacific provider to identify aspects of the digital collection that can be highlighted to encourage Pacific communities to access online collections (such as blogs).
- Identify five schools in the Te Whanganui-a-tara Wellington area with high Pacific rolls that Te Papa can work with to utilise digital collections in schoolwork.
- Identify key community partners to co-deliver confrontational talanoa about different collection items that challenge assumptions about Pacific peoples and touch on taboo topics.

Years Three-Five

- Deliver two key stories for Pacific peoples' empowerment via digital, physical or audio methods.
- Partner with three schools for five years to utilise the Pacific digital collections for assignments.
- Deliver two community partner 'taboo talanoa'.
- Explore partnership with Digital Pasifik to actively seek opportunities for international collaborations in developing Pacific collections and enabling community labelling of museums' digital Pacific collections internationally.
- Run a targeted social media campaign for the digital Pacific collections within Te Papa.

Collection Strategy

It is recommended that Te Papa invest further in developing Pacific collections that reflect the diversity of Pacific peoples and the nuance of Pacific experiences. Pacific peoples expressed an appreciation of the Pacific collections in museums, but they would like these to reflect the diversity of Pacific peoples and the nuance of Pacific experiences.

Year One

- Develop an increased investment plan to:
 - further develop the Pacific collections in their museums to reflect the nuance and complexity of the Pacific region and Pacific peoples in Aotearoa New Zealand;
 - continue and widen Pacific teams' scope to co-create and co-collect with Pacific communities.
- Develop an education plan for Te Papa staff on the Pacific population in Aotearoa New Zealand and the role of museums in stereotypes that continue to impact Pacific peoples to be delivered over five years.

Years Two-Five

- Deliver initial professional development program on the Pacific population in Aotearoa New Zealand and the role of museums in stereotypes that continue to impact Pacific peoples.

Conclusion

Te Papa's enthusiasm to explore Pacific peoples' access to and consumption of museum content from a Pacific perspective is a positive step towards Te Papa's overall vision for Pacific audience engagement. This report has highlighted some significant barriers in Te Papa's immediate circle of influence, such as how they develop and show Pacific taonga. Other barriers, such as time and the rising cost of living, will require more creative and long-term planning from Te Papa. Pacific peoples want to have museums that facilitate pride, belonging, and identity. The insights from this research offer an opportunity for Te Papa to contribute towards reimagining the museum as a space that reflects the needs, aspirations and voice of Pacific communities: an accessible, relevant, interactive, distributed physical and digital space where Pacific people are an active part of the conversation.

"I believe that the museum... ..has that power to give that to our people."



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Appendix: Aspirational Quotes

Based on the below quotes Pacific peoples aspire to have museums be a more interactive, engaging and comfortable space reflective of them in staff, governance, culture, language and food. Pacific peoples aspire to have museums tell comprehensive, empowering and truthful stories of the Pacific that portray the connections that Pacific people have to heritage, Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific region. Such spaces should be developed in consultation with Pacific communities and involve long term inclusive relationships in the creation of exhibits, performances or Pacific events that are held at or displayed by the museums.

Interactive

Te Papa should consider the opportunity to develop and deliver Pacific-specific pop-up exhibitions, including space for talanoa about the taonga and how they impact Pacific peoples today. Pop-up exhibitions provide an opportunity to address time, cost and travel concerns outlined in the report. Te Papa has utilised pop-up travelling exhibitions in the past, and initiating one with a Pacific-specific audience focus will help to increase Pacific audience engagement.

*...even **if you had somebody there that would sort of see that there's a family that they'd actually come forward and talk.** Yeah, and explain things. That will be really nice. Yeah. Because, like I said, as a parent trying to engage your kids, and it's like, "Ugh, listening to mom again..." They could do could do kids tours. Yeah, they could. Because I see now, they're sick of listening to their mother. And then it's like, "oh, God, we're in this old building." But the, you know, like, my nine-year-old is not going to sit there and try to read that whole paragraph. She would much rather just go and touch the screen and kind of learn that way.*

Maybe the way I'd like to see it is where somebody like is talking to you... you don't have to have somebody there all the time. But like, when you talk to somebody, it's better than like, you get a better understanding than you do when you read it.

*But for the family, I think it needs to be **short, sharp messaging. Interactive, you know, different voices, not just that monotone,** kind of like just different ways of getting the messages to the visitors, as opposed to just either just reading or just listening to a monotone voice. There needs to be a bit more like excitement and just like some kind of liveliness to it. Yeah.*

*he digital it'd be a lot more like maybe like, like **having the artefacts like the you know the items there but also having like a kind of like mock one like a replica being able to like touch that.** as well. But a lot more like sounds, a lot more visuals. And those would probably be the main things I would focus on. And I'm not even like a tech savvy person. I just think it's; I just think it's the way that it's just the way it's moving. Yeah, I think I think I think the museum runs a risk of like, becoming outdated and irrelevant if it doesn't keep up.*

Maybe if there was more like, hands on activities to do, or even more people there to talk about what we're looking at.

You know, and **somebody that's just, you know, just gonna make us interested**, because when you read this, you know, you just skim and scan. Yeah. But yeah, I reckon it's just really much very much around like a people thing. That's the way I'd like to see as if we were all engaged more with each other about what we're looking at. And what history is behind each. Yeah.

you can even like, the people could be there doing activities with you, like layout, little activities for kids or something to come be like, you know, colour this in, and this means this on this, you know, whatever we're looking at, just, yeah.

They need to do some interactive things in there, **like how to make a cultural costume**. Yeah, that kind of activities in there for them to learn. How to put it together... what type of materials to use... So, I don't see much of that happening in the museum like targeting towards our children.

The Niuean community put on this, put on this event, at the bottom floor at the first floor of Te Papa in the forecourt area, the big lobby area, and it was celebrating it was for constitutions or celebrating Niuean culture. And it was all interactive. It's all... this is our culture. But this is our culture, from the **framework of weaving**, and hiapo, and there were people **demonstrating a Takalo** and all of that sort of stuff, it's like that sort of thing really helps people understand the culture, as well as the food, obviously, the food part's massive as well. But, you know, it's a little bit harder for a museum. But you know, it's like all that, again, it's all experiences, right?

But I think some of the stuff they have around like the Pacific voyages and things like that, a little bit antiquated. They're a little bit old. So, I think maybe not maybe not to that scale, but something maybe a little bit pared back, but a little bit more interactive would be good. You know, like, maybe have a waka, **maybe have a waka, that you could sit inside and then paddle and sort of feel what it might be like to paddle in an ocean. Right?**

...almost think it would be cool if they got to the point where it's probably gonna be really expensive for them if they went down this path, but you know, like the program, **Dora the Explorer, yes, where if they had like interactive maps that the kids could follow**. You get to the whatever room, the elephant room, you can tap on that. And it like reads out or shows you whatever information about the elephant that's there. I'm trying to think of how kids learn these days and ours learn a lot on their Ipad. Even if it was an app on your phone that you downloaded as you walked in. And you follow the trail that way because kids can't read maps. But it would be cool if, yeah as part of that app it had GPS tracking. So, it kind of had a little thing that followed you through. When you've got to that area, even if it was QR codes or whatever, or you could tap on whatever was on the map and bring up information about that, and it had the option of it reading out loud to you... that would be cool. And then like as you went, you could tick off the different rooms, because our problem that we have when we go is always like, "Have we been in this room?" It could, yeah, tick it off and then the kids could like... it becomes this fun thing that the kids are then going through when they're trying to get into the different rooms... could even have associated with it like a... almost like a learning trail, where each room they have to answer a question so then they're actually having to take in the information. Like what type of elephant was it? Whatever. Then they could be multichoice and at the end of it if they've completed it they could get something from it.

Sense of belonging

But you're almost if you're going to have Pacific person, you'd want **a Pacific tour guide that could speak the native tongue**. I don't know if that's asking too much. That I think that would be awesome that you had that because then I think you would have more of our retired Pacific Islander peoples, going to these things if they could, because I know that still, English is still a barrier for a lot of them, because they don't want to be teased because their English isn't right. But if they could speak their native tongue, that would be a different story for your life.

So yeah, **I think one, get our people up there. Like, give us give us the space to be able to lead**. That's what I think. And actually, allow us to lead because I, sometimes I find with some people that are Non-Pacific, Non-Māori, they learn our ways, and they think they have to lead that for us? Give us the room and space, we actually can do it and we can prove it

Yeah, yeah, like you're home, you know? Like you're **walking in... It's like you're walking into your grandma's house and there's all the lei's all over the photos and just all the siapos and like, fala out and stuff like that**, like, you want to feel you're... like you're at home?

Well, I would hope that it is **a space where we can we can see ourselves, where we can learn about our community, our you know, our culture and other cultures**. Where we can get a sense of pride of being part of this land, because the museum should be a reflection of the whenua that it sits on. So yeah, I think it should be a place where, you know, people can identify and can walk away feeling more connected and uplifted.

So, I would want **something that again, reflects the vibrancy of Pacific people and maybe the spirituality as well**. I'm not a Christian. And so, something that in when we talk about spirituality, more of the traditional spirituality, maybe rather than the colonised spirituality. Yeah, and I would like to see more videos. I'd like to see more photos lots of smiling faces. I'd like to see lots of young people as well...lots of colour and maybe you know, smell is so much of a you know.... give me some coconut! Give me some frangipani!

I would **expect to see a lot of Pacific art crafts in there... a lot of Pacific histories being displayed in the museum** because I think the last time I visited Te Papa, that wasn't long ago, there was there was more of the Māori but no offense to our Māori people. There was a lot of the histories about the Māori more so than the different Pacific nations that we have. I would like to see more of that being displayed in the museum and going back and showing like, like further into history, and how that relates to relationship with New Zealand.

It'd be so neat to have a **Bure or a village** with what that looked like. And it's really funny because you will actually see that it's not really different from the history if you see an old house from the European days.

I would I would...from scratch. Yeah, I would start with a village and then build the history around that. Yeah.

I think they need to create, perhaps a Pacific Museum on its own. **So as soon as I walk in from the entrance, you feel that Pacific vibe and that Pacific spirit... and you see all the Pacific Arts and Crafts at the entrance.** There are some stones, you know, when you go on a important platform, I don't know about your country, but for for us in the Cook Islands. And when they do an investiture for new kings or new chiefs. For each island, they go on this platform and on that platform is laid with like different stones, different stones, but very important stones and they mean something. So, it'd be nice to have those stones I don't know to represent different countries at the entrance **but it makes you feel like you coming home you're coming home and that home is in Aotearoa as well. You don't have to go back to your home.** But it's right here in New Zealand. I believe that the museum you know has that how do you say that Taonga that power to give that to our people

I feel like the Pacific languages would be more.... not so much appropriate but more fitting. And then if there was an aim to make the whole museum bilingual, then having it in Māori would be fine. Like, but making the Pacific language the main transition, I suppose.

But the main thing, **the main reason why I go there (Mangere art gallery) is because of the cafe because either they have like their Tongan coffee. They have the person who runs the cafe is Tonga, and then they have like, the Tongan pies,** they sometimes they even sell like coffee like from Tonga that you can buy they even baked like or how you like coconut bread taro bread loaves that you can actually take home. And that and I love that. And I sometimes just wouldn't even go to the gallery.... Yeah. It would be like different food... Yeah. Like, I dunno. There could be like certain days or a month, where, you know, there's like Tongan food or something, you know?

Empowering

And also, **you know, who are who are successful, who are people who have done really well.** You know, who are our great humanitarians who are great intellects who are our great sports people, because people go straight for the sports people. Just good runners. Yes. Yeah. And people who can pass the ball? ...Well, you know, we've got some very, you know, very highly intelligent, highly successful people in different fields. And, you know, it's all about that whole aspirational building and that pride building. Yeah, that sense of identity building.

I think just as important as it is for y'know Pacific kids to know their heritage or, you know, have some sort of understanding about Pacific culture through those exhibitions I think it could be just as important for non-Pacific people as well to understand our point of view. So, I would I would actually love the thought of a **Pacific exhibition being in Parnell where white people and Chinese and Indian can go to that exhibition and sort of understand what we're about.** So that's why I say, you know, it belongs everywhere. I think Pacific culture and art is a beautiful thing. And it should be shared for, you know, through to all cultures, but I think the benefit for our own people and our own kids. Yeah, there's something here in South Auckland, where the majority of Pacific people live is beneficial.

Okay, well, let's talk about the Pacific story. **Let's talk about the whole Pacific story, don't just talk about the stuff that we're proud of. Talk about the stuff that we're not super proud of as a country.** Why don't we talk about what New Zealand farming did to hollow out the sulfur? We need to tell that story. Because no one knows that story. Right? ...

...And we're gonna have climate refugees now. And we're gonna have a whole big... this is me sort of sort of like, projecting out into the future, there's going to be a whole wave of anti-Pacific sentiment, when we have climate refugees, because people won't understand, "Oh, why are these people here? I don't understand why don't they just go live where they live? Well, the sea level rises. Well, that doesn't mean anything to them, until they're actually like, you know, pulled into this as what it actually means.

But like you said, **if they hold all our Taonga, if they have our stories, if they have, if they have the ability to tell them, again, The Good, the Bad, and The Ugly, then they, you know, they take on the responsibility to house those things, then they take on the responsibility to show them and teach people.** Because otherwise why have them? You know, if it's just a storage area for our stories and our Taonga, give them back to us, and we'll tell our own stories.

As much as it is quite uncomfortable... and especially if you're talking about Dawn Raids, and like Land Wars and things like that, you know? **We need to acknowledge these things that they did happen, you know, they can't go down as just kind of been swept under the mat.** But also, like, not to dwell on these things? Not so much dwell... I don't know if that's a good word, but like moving forward with exhibitions that can kind of maybe, where are we now?

Connection

I guess when I go to museum, **I would like to feel like I connect with something Yeah, I guess I'd just like to feel connection, I guess. I feel connected through seeing my culture as far as as well as I guess, looking at the history of Auckland.** Yeah, I guess those are the main ones for me.

I think that's important to show in the museum and for our children to see the connection between **Aotearoa and the Pacific countries.** And I will take my kids there to see, you know, it'll be like something that'd be very proud for our people to see that connection with the Aotearoa people, because what's the point of showing Pacific arts and artefacts in there if you don't see if there's any connections in there?

living in the Cook Islands... **the story that we were told that there were about seven canoes that departed Rarotonga and came to Aotearoa. But when we come to Aotearoa, there is no acknowledgement of that story, but when you go to Rarotonga, there is a very important landmark on one part of Rarotonga, they have the storing date and marks where the seven-canoes departed for Aotearoa.** So, it's there. So, you know, our children and our people are aware that seven canoes came to Aotearoa but when we come here, and when we go into the museum, we don't see any of that acknowledgement. In the museum. So yeah, I would love to see more of that. Know, how do we connect? Yeah.

Things that I can point out to my children, and my grandchildren. You know, "Oh, this is our island! Oh, that's probably, you know, our great great grandmother! So yeah, things that, you know, that we can connect them with, from our own. Yeah, our own whanau. Yeah. Passing that on to the children. Yeah. Because that's what makes it meaningful, isn't it? When you can, you know, contribute to the story, the stories' up there, okay. And then you know, you can add to the story? Yeah, yeah.

I think it's because, like, when I think about the Pacific section at the museum, I feel like palagi people put it together. **But if there was like a Pacific Museum, I feel like it'll come from our people. Like, you'll get more of a connection or something like that.**

I just think there should definitely be history definitely about the Auckland region or Tamaki Makaurau. And the Pacific as well, I think that's important just because Auckland is such a multi-cultural place. If it's like learning about the other cultures, like the history of the other cultures and how they came to New Zealand would be interesting to see as well.

Growing up um, because we hear a lot of Legends. And legends are very important to us to know to learn and to pass on to our next generation. **But seeing like, the fruits or something that ties to those legend makes them more important for us to pass it on,** because you're actually showing them what it looks like, what those legend looks like.

Like on the language week that they had made like a special exhibition for the different languages, I think. Maybe like workshops during that week would be cool, like on that language or something like that.

Community involvement

I mean, **if the museum is looking at attracting more Pacific people or more people, one way of doing that is by working together with our community, not working in silos or expecting them to come if you want something to be done in the community, you have to go and work with them,** connect with them. It's like a village having a village system. And that's always been successful with us. Everything with that is all about our community or working with other people.

Because then the community there are pockets of old people where they gather together and they do like activities. **So, it'd be nice for them to be involved with a museum where they can take whatever they make in the community. Take it to the museum and display it right there.** Yeah, that's that can be another way of attracting the old people to come to the museum more often.

But I guess if I think about the museum, it's commissioned art. It's people who have already made it as people who are famous in their respective area. **And yeah, I feel like if I saw or if I know someone who was up and coming or someone who was from the community, I feel like I'd be more inclined to go to the museum like I would make more of an effort.** And I think the travel would be worth it. To see someone from you know, to see someone who doesn't live in a flash house or just lives in, I dunno... their mum's garage, like just to... Knowing that they've created this and to go and support that I think for me, yeah, I would make the effort to sit in that traffic.

I think as museums start to try and find their place in the modern world, it has to be more experiential, like libraries are also being forced to change and that way, they're less of a place to get books, because you can get books from anywhere, and more information from anywhere rather. **And now it's more of a community hub, or community center, or somewhere where you go and, you know, it's that sort of stuff. So, museums have to change with the times and, and the way to do it is to provide experiences.**

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