

# PASIFIKA COMMUNITIES IN AUSTRALIA

2021 Census



AUSTRALIAN  
PASIFIKA  
EDUCATORS  
NETWORK



CENTRE FOR  
WESTERN SYDNEY



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The Australian Pasifika Educators Network (APEN) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and recognise their continuing connection to lands, waters, cosmos and communities. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and acknowledge them as knowledge holders and peoples of great ingenuity and innovation.

APEN is committed to navigate space and our proximity to Australian Indigenous peoples as Pacific Indigenous peoples in ways that *teu ma tausí le vā*<sup>1</sup> - respectfully centres and nurtures our relational space.

*Photography by Sally Tsoutas*

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### Australian Pasifika Educators Network:

<https://www.pasifikaeducators.com.au/get-in-touch>

### Centre for Western Sydney:

[cfws@westernsydney.edu.au](mailto:cfws@westernsydney.edu.au)

Design by Joanne Moussa, Moosart:

[joanne@moosart.com.au](mailto:joanne@moosart.com.au)

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<sup>1</sup> A Samoan concept/tenet/practice that refers to the ways in which Pasifika peoples nurture, cherish and care for our physical, spiritual, cultural, social and psychosocial spaces within our human relationships (Ane 2016; Seiuli 2016; Tamasese, et al. 1997).

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### AUSTRALIAN PASIFIKA EDUCATORS NETWORK

#### AUSTRALIAN PASIFIKA EDUCATORS NETWORK (APEN)

The Australian Pasifika Educators Network (APEN) is a national volunteer-led community organisation. We are teachers, school executives, university academic and professional staff, community educators and advocates dedicated to advancing the educational experiences, opportunities and positive outcomes for Pasifika learners and communities. Our vision is to see Pasifika educators, learners and communities thrive in Australian society by amplifying their perspectives, advocating for systemic change and celebrating our excellence.

APEN's approach is to better understand the experiences of Australian Pasifika learners and educators, through talanoa,<sup>2</sup> consultation and research that informs culturally responsive policy and best practice that supports Pasifika educators, learners and communities, and to facilitate opportunities to connect, support and celebrate Pasifika educators, learners and communities.

APEN's work is supported by the following institutions: University of Technology Sydney, Western Sydney University, University of Sydney, University of New South Wales, Griffith University, NSW Department of Education and Queensland Department of Education.



#### CENTRE FOR WESTERN SYDNEY

Western Sydney University is the only university in New South Wales with a legislated commitment to conduct research that meets the needs of Western Sydney communities. Fulfilling this unique mandate for research, the university established the Centre for Western Sydney in 2014. The centre combines world-class research expertise with frank and fearless advocacy on issues of importance to Western Sydney. The centre's work is guided by its ambition for a thriving Western Sydney that is understood and respected for its strengths and contributions regionally, nationally and internationally. Delivered through a strong politics of listening, the centre aims to drive informed dialogue and action for and with its region.

<sup>2</sup> Talanoa is a concept grounded in Pasifika cultures that refers to a traditional form of dialogue and storytelling. It involves open and inclusive discussions among individuals or groups, with a focus on sharing personal experiences, perspectives and knowledge (Vaiioleti, 2006).



# ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Gabriella Gerace



**Research Assistant, Centre for Western Sydney**

Gabriella is a research assistant and postgraduate psychology student with a research focus on cognitive psychology. Gabriella holds a Bachelor of Music and Sound Design and a Bachelor of Psychological Sciences and has a strong interest in undertaking social research.

Dr Rhonda Itaoui



**Director, Centre for Western Sydney**

Dr Rhonda Itaoui is a social researcher with global expertise in the geographies of diversity and multiculturalism in urban spaces. Rhonda Itaoui has a PhD and first-class honours in human geography focused on developing inclusive urban spaces in both Australia and the United States. Rhonda has led a range of collaborative research projects to inform key strategies, policies and thought leadership in Western Sydney. Rhonda is passionate about using research to advocate for communities through consultation, partnership and meaningful engagement.

Tofa Amanda Moors-Mailei



**Manager, Policy and Advocacy (Student Equity), Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, University of Technology Sydney**

Amanda is an educator and equity practitioner with a career spanning almost 20 years in Australia and Aotearoa, New Zealand education sectors. Amanda is from the villages of Lepea, Faga, Saleufi and Siumu in Samoa and has spent the past eight years managing equity access and pathways at the University of Technology Sydney. Amanda's work involves the design and delivery of strategic initiatives to advance access and participation for students systematically excluded from university. She is a fierce advocate for culturally responsive practice, racial justice and interrogating dominant narratives in the Australian higher education system. Amanda is a founding member and co-chair of the APEN.



## Bronwyn Williams



### **Senior Project Officer – Community, Future Student Engagement, Western Sydney University**

Bronwyn hails from the village of Avatele in Niue and the islands of Rarotonga and Aituataki in the Cook Islands. With a 22-year career as an equity practitioner in universities across Australia and New Zealand (Aotearoa), she currently serves as the lead of Pasifika Achievement to Higher Education (PATHE) at Western Sydney University. Bronwyn's academic achievements include a Masters of Arts and a Masters of Literature, which have provided her with a deep understanding and genuine passion for the educational journeys of Pacific youth. Her drive lies in creating opportunities and support systems that empower young Pacific learners. Bronwyn is a founding member and co-chair of the APEN.

## Paniani Patu



### **Manager, Education Support (Western Baludarri Precinct), Sydney Medical School Faculty of Medicine and Health, The University of Sydney**

Pani is a community advocate of Samoan descent, hailing from the villages of Moata'a, Vaiala, Safune and Lotofaga in Samoa. Pani holds a Bachelor of Science as well as a Master of Public Health with a focus on chronic disease prevention strategies in Pasifika Island communities. Pani currently leads the delivery of educational support initiatives for the University of Sydney's flagship program, the Doctor of Medicine, in the Western Sydney (Baludarri) precinct and has a strong interest in Pasifika Indigenous pedagogical frameworks and culturally responsive practices in education and research.

## Dr Vaoiva Natapu-Ponton



### **Senior Research Fellow (Pathways in Place), Griffith University**

Vaoiva (Iva) is of Samoan heritage from the villages of Moata'a, Apolima and Iva, Savaii. She completed a Doctorate in Education at The University of Melbourne. Her research investigated the motivations of Melbourne-based Samoan students to learn, what concerned them and sharing impediments to their educational success. Equipped with strategies to overcome learning challenges and how to navigate systems with success, research participants were empowered to utilise cultural values and beliefs to their learning advantage. Iva has over 25 years' experience as an educator and researcher in Australia and New Zealand with special interests in designing strategies to enhance student success in the transition from school to the tertiary sector. She is passionate about utilising Pasifika Indigenous methodologies when supporting communities to achieve educational and social outcomes with success.

# FOREWORD

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Being from a Pacific heritage provides a proud platform of belonging to something greater than ourselves. As indigenous people of Oceania, we know that our individual identities are connected to others including our families, and the many communities we interact with including faith and sporting. It is through this connection to self and others, and the practices of our traditional cultures and customs that we make sense of who we are, whether it be in our countries of origin, or Australia.

This new report helps further highlight our visibility and presence. We are a growing community in Australia and continue to contribute greatly in many different ways. In the mainstream, we are known through our involvement in various professional codes as elite athletes and as creatives across the visual and performing arts. At the same time, this census data highlights various areas of development, and how we can use our strengths and capabilities to unlock potential and possibilities.

Through the grounded recommendations of this report, Pacific people can meaningfully engage in the evolving identity of the Pacific diaspora on this island continent. Social structures and systems should be challenged to be better informed and inclusive of our diverse ways of knowing and doing, being and becoming. Such changes and inclusion of diversity in how we engage people educationally, through their health needs, in their interactions with the law, and accessing welfare support is part of this solution.

I genuinely believe that we as Pacific communities will continue to do the ally work with First Nations communities in Australia, whilst also contributing to the current and next generation of Pasifika achievement and excellence through education and employment pursuits. Let's all continue to build upon our natural inclination to be collectively and communally driven, whilst value adding to the national identity of this country located within the mighty Moana.

**Professor  
Jioji Ravulo**

**The University of Sydney**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a comprehensive analysis of Pasifika communities in Australia based on the 2021 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) census.<sup>3</sup>

The Australian Pasifika Educators Network (APEN) define 'Pasifika' as peoples and communities who are genealogically, spiritually and culturally connected to the lands, the skies and the seas of the Pacific region (including Aotearoa New Zealand), and who have chosen to settle in and call Australia home.<sup>4</sup>

This analysis seeks to track key trends that have emerged since the 2015 Pacific communities report published by Professor Jioji Ravulo based on the 2011 census. In accordance with the intent of the original report, this current version seeks to provide an understanding of the current demographic and socio-economic experiences of Pasifika communities, with a particular focus on education. This analysis covers population, education

levels and employment patterns, as well as family and household characteristics, to not only shed light on the unique circumstances faced by Pasifika communities but also track key trends over the decade between 2011 and 2021. In addition, an examination of the Western Sydney region has been included, highlighting the significance of place-based insights into Pasifika communities towards informing policy responses and initiatives.



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## POPULATION

▶ The population of Pasifika communities in Australia has consistently grown since the previous census. The current population stands at 415,033, indicating an increase of 165,000 individuals between 2011 and 2021. This places the Pasifika population at 1.6% of the total Australian population, a significant rise from 0.6% in 2011.

- ▶ Higher percentages of Pasifika individuals are in the 0–29-year age range.
- ▶ Pasifika peoples have a lower life expectancy than the general Australian population, significantly below the national average of 83 years.

▶ The report highlights specific geographic clusters of Pasifika communities, including a population of 147,928 in Queensland and 133,475 in New South Wales.

▶ Pasifika peoples without Australian citizenship or permanent residency face barriers to government benefits and access to education, with Pasifika youth holding New Zealand citizenship less likely to complete a university education.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ABS (2022a).

<sup>4</sup> In Australia, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) categorises Pasifika ethnic heritages within an Oceania category, encompassing 23 distinct heritages from three broad geographic regions: Micronesia, Polynesia, and Melanesia (Ravulo 2015). It is important to emphasise that consultations between the Pasifika peoples and the Australian government to determine appropriate term(s) for this category are yet to take place (Enari and Haua, 2021, p. 5). These 23 diverse heritages collectively form the analytical category known as "Pasifika," building upon previous census analyses conducted in 2011, which also included New Zealand Māori. This analysis acknowledges that each heritage within this category holds its own unique politics, language, histories, and cultural practices, underscoring the significance of recognising the heterogeneity within it.

<sup>5</sup> From July 2023 onwards, New Zealand citizens who have resided in Australia for four years with permanent residency for at least 12 months are now eligible for citizenship, which may shape future education trends amongst New Zealand citizens residing in Australia.

## EDUCATION

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- ▶ There has been increased engagement in early childhood, primary and secondary education levels among the Pasifika population, which has resulted in a significant increased completion of Year 12 or equivalent since 2011.
- ▶ Participation in university study remains lower among Pasifika peoples, with the Pasifika population primarily pursuing certificate-level education.

## EMPLOYMENT

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- ▶ **Pasifika peoples in Australia earn less than the general population despite working similar hours.**
- ▶ Pasifika peoples are most represented in health care and social assistance, as well as construction, manufacturing, and postal and warehousing industries.
- ▶ The Pasifika population is less represented in professional, education and training, scientific and technical services.
- ▶ Pasifika peoples are more represented among both those who are unemployed and those seeking full-time work.
- ▶ A significant percentage of the unemployed or those not in the labour force from both the Pasifika and the general Australian populations receive government assistance. This has increased since 2011, which could reflect the impact of COVID-19.

## FAMILY

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- ▶ Pasifika communities maintain a higher rate of larger families, with a greater proportion having four to 10 children, compared with the average Australian population. Pasifika families are four times more likely to consist of six or more persons. However, a trend towards slightly smaller family sizes emerged over the decade between 2011 and 2021 among Pasifika families.
- ▶ Childcare responsibilities are substantial within Pasifika families because of their larger size, with care often communally shared.

▶ **The Pasifika population remains overrepresented in multiple family households, potentially reflecting cultural norms of cohabitation as well as cost-of-living pressures.**

## HOUSEHOLD

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- ▶ **It is more common for Pasifika communities to live in larger, multi-family households, compared with the general population, particularly when there are five or more individuals living together. In addition, it is significantly more common for Pasifika communities to live in dwellings with eight or more individuals than the general Australian population.**

▶ **Public housing accommodates a slightly larger proportion of the Pasifika community compared with the general population.**

# RECOMMENDATIONS

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1

## ADDRESS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Enhance funding and research opportunities dedicated to understanding the educational experiences and aspirations of Pasifika learners in Australia. There is a particular need to expand equity group definitions and profiles to include Pasifika peoples as a targeted equity group within Australian higher educational policy. Initiatives developed to address educational needs must engage Pasifika experts, leaders and communities to identify cultural strengths and needs, and co-design educational solutions that will empower Pasifika learners.

2

## PROMOTE ACCESSIBILITY TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Develop tailored support mechanisms for Pasifika peoples that resonate with their unique socio-economic circumstances. Encourage community-driven initiatives, parental involvement and the promotion of positive role models within the education sector to enhance educational outcomes.

3

## INTERVENE IN BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION

Formulate interventions and programs that provide socio-economic support and foster collaborative partnerships between the education sector and Pasifika communities. High-quality school education, positive Pasifika role models, tailored support at different educational levels and a stronger connection between qualifications and desired employment opportunities should be integral parts of these interventions.

4

## IMPLEMENT TARGETED EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Address the specific challenges faced by Pasifika communities in areas such as employment and income through the development and implementation of targeted support programs. This can be facilitated by tracking graduate employment rates and career outcomes.

5

## PROVIDE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE SOCIAL SERVICES

Enhance the provision of culturally informed services across sectors such as education, health care and community support to cater to the diverse needs of Pasifika communities. This could include support for mental health and wellbeing and assistance for families grappling with low incomes and large family sizes.

6

## ADDRESS HOUSING AND AFFORDABILITY

Adopt a multifaceted approach that combines policy interventions, financial incentives and collaborative efforts between government, industry stakeholders and community organisations to cater for growing housing needs among Pasifika communities.

7

## STRENGTHEN DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH

Continue data collection and research efforts to monitor the progress, challenges and evolving needs of Pasifika communities, employing culturally appropriate methodologies. This will facilitate evidence-based decision-making and the creation of culturally informed, targeted policies and interventions.

8

## IMPLEMENT TARGETED, PLACE-BASED INTERVENTIONS

Consider the unique challenges and opportunities within Pasifika communities in different regions in Australia and develop tailored strategies that empower these communities to thrive across all regions.



**This report highlights the need for a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that addresses the diverse needs and challenges of Pasifika communities across various domains. Through concerted efforts and collaboration among government, the education sector, community organisations and the Pasifika community itself, these proposed measures can create a more inclusive, equitable and vibrant future for Pasifika communities in Australia.**

# 1. DEFINITIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

## GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

### Teu ma tausi le vā

Samoan concept/tenet/practice that refers to the ways in which Pasifika peoples nurture, cherish and care for our physical, spiritual, cultural, social and psychosocial spaces within our human relationships.<sup>6</sup>



### Pasifika

Peoples and communities who are genealogically, spiritually and culturally connected to the lands, the skies and the seas of the Pacific region (including Aotearoa New Zealand), and who have chosen to settle in and call Australia home.<sup>7</sup>



### Talanoa

Talanoa is a concept grounded in Pasifika cultures that refers to a traditional form of dialogue and storytelling. It involves open and inclusive discussions among individuals or groups, with a focus on sharing personal experiences, perspectives and knowledge.<sup>8</sup>



## ABS CENSUS CATEGORIES AND SUPPLEMENTARY CODES



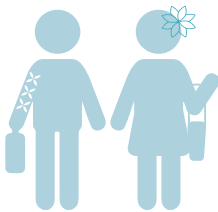
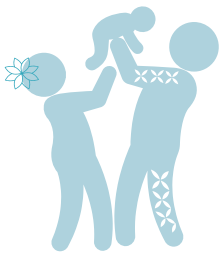

	CODE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Ancestry</b>	<b>ANCP</b>	Ancestry multi response (ANCP) indicates how people identify their ancestry. Respondents can provide up to two responses. These responses are combined and output into Ancestry multi response.
<b>Supplementary codes</b>	<b>nec</b>	Not elsewhere classified (nec) categories are used for responses where there is not a specific category in the classification.
	<b>nfd</b>	Not further defined (nfd) categories are used when enough information exists to partially code a response, but not enough to code it to the most detailed category in the classification.
	<b>Not Applicable</b>	Not Applicable means the question was not applicable to the person so they did not need to respond. For example, questions relating to employment are only applicable for people aged 15 years and over. People aged under 15 years are in the Not applicable category.
<b>Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)</b>	<b>IRSD</b>	Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage

<sup>6</sup> Anae (2016); Seiuli (2016); Tamasese et al. (1997).

<sup>7</sup> APEN (2023).

<sup>8</sup> Vaiioleti (2006)

## ABS CENSUS CLASSIFICATIONS, INDEX WITH DOMAIN

DOMAIN	MNEMONIC	DESCRIPTION
<b>Demographic</b> 	<b>AGE5P</b> <b>SEXP</b> <b>CITP</b> <b>RLHP</b> <b>AUSTRALIA</b>	Age in Five Year Groups Sex Australian Citizenship Relationship in Household Australian Population
<b>Education</b> 	<b>QALFP</b> <b>TYSTAP</b> <b>TYPY</b> <b>HSCP</b> <b>QALLP</b> <b>STUP</b>	Non-School Qualification: Field of Study Educational Institution: Attendee Status Type of Education Institution Attending Highest Year of School Completed Non-School Qualification: Level of Education Full-Time / Part-Time Student Status
<b>Employment</b> 	<b>HRSP</b> <b>INCP</b> <b>INDP</b> <b>INDP 2 DIGIT (CONST)</b> <b>INDP 2 DIGIT (MANUF)</b> <b>LFHRP</b> <b>MTWP</b> <b>EMTP</b> <b>DOMP</b>	Hours Worked Total Personal Income (weekly) Industry of Employment Industry of Employment – Construction Industry of Employment – Manufacturing Labour Force Status and Hours Worked Not Stated Method of Travel to Work Employment Type Unpaid Domestic Work: Number of Hours
<b>Family</b> 	<b>CHCAREP</b> <b>TISP</b> <b>CTPP</b> <b>CACF</b> <b>CDCF</b> <b>CPRF</b> <b>FBLF</b> <b>FINF</b> <b>FMCF</b> <b>HCFMF</b> <b>LFSF</b>	Unpaid Child Care Number of Children Ever Born Child Type Count of All Children in Family Count of Dependent Children in Family Count of Persons in Family Family Blending Total Family Income (weekly) Family Composition Family Household Composition (Family) Labour Force Status of Parents/Partners in Families
<b>Household</b> 	<b>MV5D</b> <b>MV1D</b> <b>HHCD</b> <b>NPRD</b> <b>LLDD</b> <b>TENLLD</b>	Household Five Year Mobility Indicator Household One Year Mobility Indicator Household Composition Number of Persons Usually Resident in Dwelling, Landlord Type Tenure and Landlord Type – Mortgage, 2021







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Australia's historical relationship with the Pacific Island states, territories and peoples has been both extensive and diverse. Geographical proximity paved the way for the migration of Pasifika peoples to Australia, which traces back to the early 1860s, when many were brought, often through forced means, to work in Queensland's sugar plantations under labour schemes. The multicultural policies of the 1960s and 1970s in Australia led to an increased migration of Pasifika peoples, resulting in the growth and establishment of vibrant Pasifika communities within the country. This was facilitated by migration policies that treated New Zealanders as exempt non-citizens in Australia, not requiring a visa for entry prior to the introduction of the Migration Regulations Act 1994. The result was a wave of migration of Pasifika communities through New Zealand from the late 1980s to the early 1990s.<sup>10</sup>

Pasifika communities in Australia embody a diverse range of ethnicities and cultures indigenous to the Pacific Island states and territories. With representation from over 20 distinct ethnic backgrounds, including Fiji, Samoa, Niue, Tonga, Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea, they have successfully established thriving settlements across various cities and regions throughout Australia. Their presence has left an indelible mark on the cultural tapestry and social dynamics of the nation. Their strong connections with their homelands enable them to nurture cultural ties and actively promote their rich traditions. Beyond cultural enrichment, individuals within Pasifika communities have excelled across diverse fields such as the arts, sports, academia, business and community leadership. Through their remarkable achievements, they have contributed significantly to the broader Australian society.

Recognising and appreciating the presence and contributions of Pasifika communities underscores the paramount importance of embracing and valuing diverse cultures and backgrounds within the multicultural fabric of Australia. It highlights the significance of promoting a more inclusive and harmonious society – one that celebrates and cherishes the profound richness of this country's multicultural heritages.

The demographic analysis of Pasifika communities provided sheds light on key characteristics, trends and potential strengths, as well as challenges in need of further examination, including areas in which researchers, educators and community practitioners might seek to expand the analysis.



<sup>10</sup> Migration of Pasifika peoples was also facilitated by the Seasonal Worker and Pacific Labour Mobility Scheme, sponsored study abroad programs with countries such as Tonga by the Australian Government, and the newly introduced Pacific Engagement Visa (Enari & Taula, 2022; Lee, Connell, Voigt-Graf, Iredale, Khoo, Borovnik, Bedford, Krishnan, Hong, Mares, MacLellan & Esau, 2007; Vasta, 2004).

# 3. REPORT OVERVIEW

This report compiles data from the 2021 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). This document provides the second iteration on the human geography of Pasifika peoples within an Australian context,<sup>10</sup> aimed at gathering greater insight into Pasifika communities, as well as comparing and tracing key trends through various data points. In addition, this report provides a spotlight on Pasifika communities in Western Sydney, where nearly 20% of the nation's Pasifika population currently resides. This case study is provided to demonstrate the importance of place-based analyses that inform responses in alignment with the unique needs of various local communities.

## PASIFIKA PEOPLES IN AUSTRALIA

Consistent with 2011 census data, Australia's Pasifika population comprises 23 Pacific ancestries (Table 3.1). These ancestries represent a diverse range of ethnicities and cultures from Melanesian, Polynesian and Micronesian groups, encompassing various Pacific Island states and territories.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Pasifika population in Australia includes the Indigenous people of New Zealand (Māori).<sup>12</sup>

The ABS now includes a classification for people self-identifying with Fijian Indian ancestry listed under Southern Asian ancestry. Fijian Indians are one of the largest migrant groups with Pasifika heritage in Australia, tracing back to the indentured labourers brought over

from India to Fiji between 1879 and 1920.<sup>13</sup> For this report, people who identify with Fijian Indian ancestry have been excluded from the analysis to enable comparability with previous information on Pasifika communities published in 2015. APEN recognises and acknowledges the invaluable contributions of the Australian Fijian Indian community. Their cultural richness, economic contributions and social connections have greatly enriched the diversity and vibrancy of our Pasifika community in Australia. It is essential to note that roughly 17,942 people in Australia identify as Fijian Indians. Fijian Indians, therefore, represent the second largest cohort of Pasifika peoples in Australia.

## PASIFIKA POPULATION GROWTH



## POPULATION GROWTH: 2011-2021

Australia's Pasifika population grew by 165,000 between 2011 and 2021. The most significant increase is observed in the Māori and Samoan populations, with a growth of over 40,000 people in each cohort (Table 3.1).

## TOP 3 PASIFIKA COHORTS



**MĀORI**

170,035



**SAMOAN**

98,024



**TONGAN**

43,459

*Samoan motifs by Lisha Sablan, featured in Ponton (2021)*

## TOP 3 FASTEST GROWING PASIFIKA COHORTS



**NI-VANUATU**

↑ 238%

INCREASE



**MELANESIAN & PAPUAN, NFD**

↑ 143%

INCREASE



**TUVALUAN**

↑ 131%

INCREASE

<sup>10</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>11</sup> Development Policy Centre (2022).

<sup>12</sup> See footnote 4 on page 11

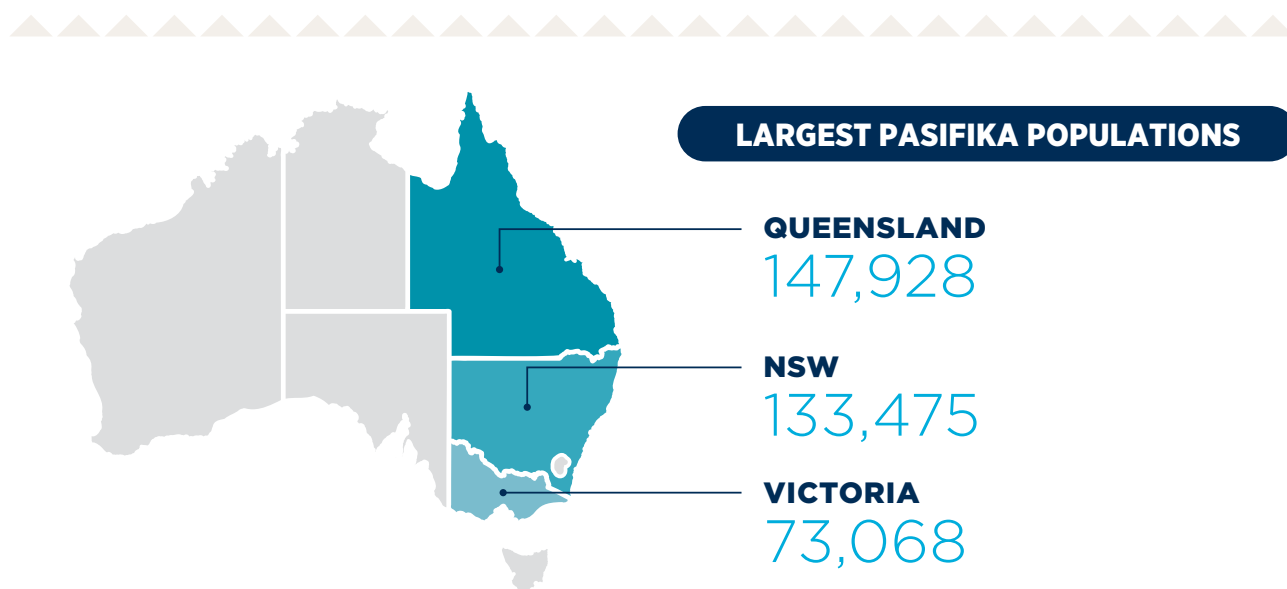
<sup>13</sup> Development Policy Centre (2022)

**TABLE 3.1: PASIFIKA POPULATION IN AUSTRALIA BY ANCESTRY (2011 & 2021)**

ANCESTRY	POPULATION (2011)	POPULATION (2021)	CHANGE SINCE 2011
Cook Islander	16,193	27,494	+11,301
Fijian	23,770	48,354	+24,584
Hawaiian	333	671	+338
I-Kiribati	677	1,263	+586
Maori	128,430	170,057	+41,627
Nauruan	409	571	+162
New Caledonian	204	367	+163
Niuean	3143	6,225	+3,082
Ni-Vanuatu	705	2,380	+1,675
Papua New Guinean	15,460	22,668	+7,208
Samoaan	55,843	98,022	+42,179
Solomon Islander	1,405	2,704	+1,299
Tahitian	722	1,504	+782
Tokelauan	1,655	2,544	+889
Tongan	25,096	43,469	+18,373
Tuvaluan	430	995	+565
Melanesian and Papuan, nec*	530	136	-394
Melanesian and Papuan, nfd	643	1,561	+918
Micronesian, nec	138	210	+72
Micronesian, nfd	99	148	+49
Oceanian, nfd*	12,541	8,129	-4,412
Polynesian, nec	443	868	+425
Polynesian, nfd	2164	4,787	+2,623
<b>Total**</b>	<b>279,248</b>	<b>445,127</b>	<b>+165,879</b>

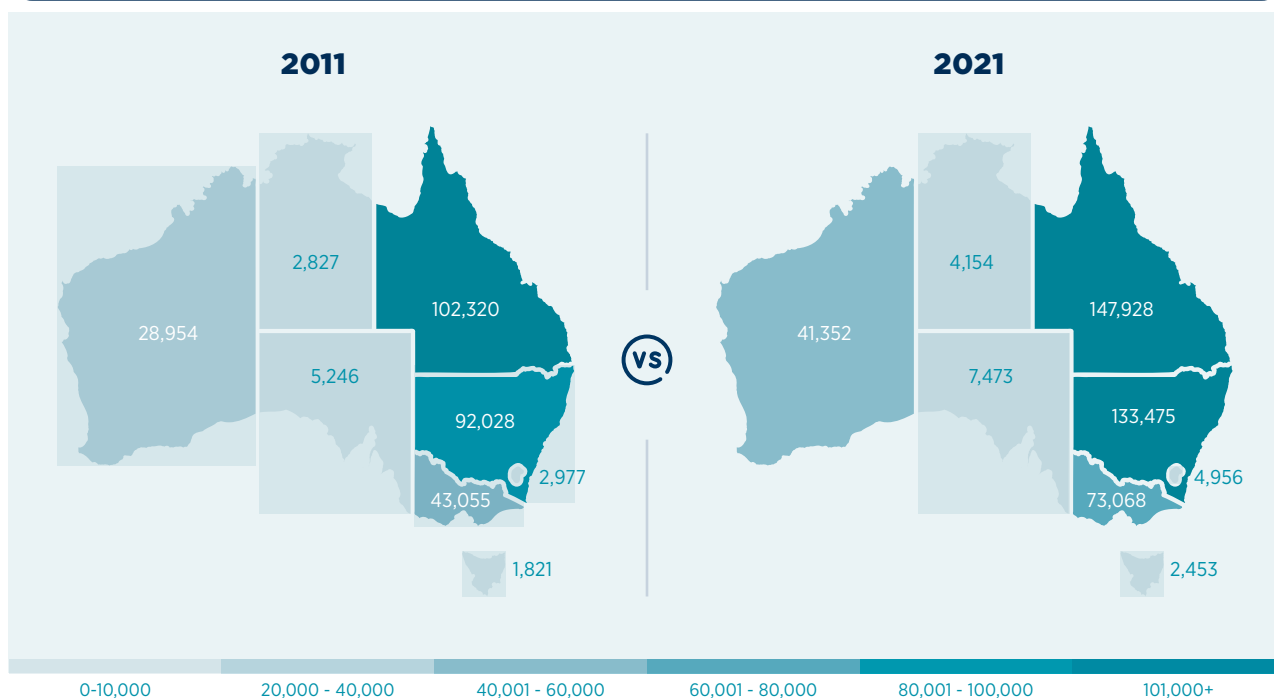
\*Further defined (nfd), not elsewhere classified (nec)

\*\*Population totals include all Australian states and territories and figures classified as others in ABS data file. Adjustment for double counting has yet to be made; an approximate double count is estimated at 30,094.



Most Pasifika communities in Australia continue to reside along the east coast (Table 3.2).<sup>14</sup> Among the states with significant Pasifika population, Queensland is home to the largest cohort, followed by New South Wales and Victoria. Furthermore, New South Wales and Queensland experienced the most substantial growth in the Pasifika population between 2011 and 2021 (Table 3.2).

## PASIFIKA PEOPLES ACROSS AUSTRALIA



**TABLE 3.2: PASIFIKA POPULATION ACROSS AUSTRALIAN STATES AND TERRITORIES (2011 & 2021)**

	PASIFIKA POPULATION	% OF STATE/ TERRITORY POPULATION	PASIFIKA POPULATION	% OF STATE/ TERRITORY POPULATION	CHANGE IN POPULATION SINCE 2011
	2011	2011	2021	2021	
New South Wales	92,028	1.3%	133,475	1.7%	+41,447
Victoria	43,055	0.8%	73,068	1.1%	+29,968
Queensland	102,320	2.4%	147,928	2.9%	+45,404
South Australia	5,246	0.3%	7,473	0.4%	+2,203
Western Australia	28,954	1.3%	41,352	1.6%	+12,379
Tasmania	1,821	0.4%	2,453	0.4%	+624
Northern Territory	2,827	1.3%	4,154	1.8%	+1,320
Australian Capital Territory	2,977	0.8%	4,956	1.1%	+1,959
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>279,228</b>	<b>1.3%*</b>	<b>414,859</b>	<b>1.6%</b>	<b>+135,631</b>

\*Percentage of Australia's total population of 25,422,788.

Consistent with 2011 census data, a review of the five largest Pasifika cohorts in Australia, indicates that New South Wales is home to the largest Samoan, Tongan and Fijian communities while Queensland is home to the largest group of Māori and Cook Islanders<sup>15</sup> (Table 3.3–3.7).

Additionally, Māori population make up the largest portion of the growth of the Pasifika population in Queensland, while Samoan and Fijian groups represent the largest portion of the growth in New South Wales.

<sup>14</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>15</sup> Ravulo (2015).

**TABLE 3.3: MĀORI POPULATION (2011 & 2021)**

MĀORI POPULATION					
	2011	2011	2021	2021	Change
NSW	32,193	25.1%	39,741	23.4%	+7,548
VIC	18,367	14.3%	25,888	15.2%	+7,521
QLD	48,283	37.6%	65,031	38.2%	+16,784
SA	3,239	2.5%	3,929	2.3%	+690
WA	23,063	18.0%	31,044	18.3%	+7,981
TAS	1,075	0.8%	1,269	0.7%	+194
NT	1,289	1.0%	1,739	1.0%	+450
ACT	917	0.7%	1,394	0.8%	+477
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>128,426</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>170,035</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+41,609</b>

**TABLE 3.4: SAMOAN POPULATION (2011 & 2021)**

SAMOAN POPULATION					
	2011	2011	2021	2021	Change
NSW	21,680	38.8%	34,068	34.8%	+12,388
VIC	10,670	19.1%	23,082	23.5%	+12,412
QLD	20,542	36.8%	35,241	36.0%	+14,699
SA	335	0.6%	595	0.6%	+260
WA	1,729	3.1%	3,345	3.4%	+1,616
TAS	156	0.3%	217	0.2%	+61
NT	169	0.3%	422	0.4%	+253
ACT	562	1.0%	1,054	1.1%	+492
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55,843</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>98,024</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+42,181</b>

**TABLE 3.5: TONGAN POPULATION (2011 & 2021)**

TONGAN POPULATION					
	2011	2011	2021	2021	Change
NSW	14,376	57.3%	22,991	52.9%	+8,615
VIC	3,921	15.6%	7,306	16.8%	+3,385
QLD	5,065	20.2%	9,491	21.8%	+4,426
SA	233	0.9%	458	1.0%	+225
WA	663	2.6%	1,519	3.5%	+856
TAS	118	0.5%	286	0.7%	+168
NT	163	0.6%	333	0.8%	+170
ACT	559	2.2%	1,075	2.5%	+516
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>25,098</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>43,459</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+18,361</b>

**TABLE 3.6: FIJIAN POPULATION (2011 & 2021)**

FIJIAN POPULATION					
	2011	2011	2021	2021	Change
NSW	12,533	52.7%	24,899	51.5%	+12,366
VIC	3,605	15.2%	8,085	16.7%	+4,480
QLD	5,467	23.0%	10,923	22.6%	+5,456
SA	554	2.3%	1,064	2.2%	+510
WA	849	3.6%	1,737	3.6%	+888
TAS	169	0.7%	277	0.6%	+108
NT	277	1.2%	632	1.3%	+355
ACT	316	1.3%	704	1.5%	+388
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23,770</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>48,321</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+24,551</b>

**TABLE 3.7: COOK ISLANDER POPULATION (2011 & 2021)**

COOK ISLANDER POPULATION					
	2011	2011	2021	2021	Change
NSW	5,100	31.5%	8,026	29.2%	+2,926
VIC	3,835	23.7%	6,996	25.5%	+3,161
QLD	5,652	34.9%	9,528	34.7%	+3,876
SA	198	1.2%	257	0.9%	+59
WA	1,198	7.4%	2,336	8.5%	+1,138
TAS	50	0.3%	65	0.2%	+15
NT	89	0.5%	145	0.5%	+56
ACT	71	0.4%	138	0.5%	+67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,193</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>27,491</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>+11,298</b>



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## SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDEX: PASIFIKA COMMUNITIES

The 2021 census provides information on a range of social and economic aspects of Australia's population. One commonly used summary measure is the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA). Table 3.8 presents the Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage (IRSD).

The IRSD serves as a comprehensive socio-economic index that provides a summary of information concerning the economic and social conditions of individuals and households within a specific area. Capturing measures of relative disadvantage, a lower IRSD score indicates a relatively higher level of disadvantage within an area. This could be due to factors such as a significant number of low-income households, a high proportion of individuals without educational qualifications or a large presence of people in low-skilled occupations. Conversely, a higher IRSD score suggests a relative absence of disadvantage

within an area.<sup>16</sup> Areas are ordered from lowest to highest score. Areas within the lowest 10% of areas are assigned a decile number of 1, and the next lowest 10% of areas are assigned a decile number 2 and so on. The deciles assigned to areas range from 1 to 10, providing a scale to assess and compare the level of disadvantage across different regions.<sup>17</sup>

More than half of Australia's Pasifika population reside in 30 of Australia's 537 local government areas (LGAs). The average decile score for these 30 LGAs is approximately 5.9, and the median score is 6. This suggests that, on average, half of the Pasifika population reside in areas falling within the middle range of disadvantage (Table 3.8).<sup>18</sup>



<sup>16</sup> ABS (2022b).

<sup>17</sup> ABS (2022b).

<sup>18</sup> Because this table presents data exclusively on the top 30 LGAs with the highest Pasifika population, it does not account for the other half of the population. Therefore, the average decile may differ when including all LGAs.

**TABLE 3.8: SEIFA SCORES (2021), TOP 30 LGAS WITH HIGHEST PASIFIKA POPULATION, AUSTRALIA**

4-Digit Level ANCP Ancestry Multi Response	State	Pasifika Population	SEIFA (Index of Relative Socio-Economic Disadvantage Score)	Decile
Brisbane	QLD	32,471	1,045	9
Logan	QLD	27,254	944	3
Blacktown	NSW	23,460	987	6
Gold Coast	QLD	20,986	1,019	8
Moreton Bay	QLD	17,182	992	7
Ipswich	QLD	15,928	958	4
Campbelltown	NSW	12,576	947	3
Liverpool	NSW	12,234	931	3
Casey	VIC	11,991	995	7
Wyndham	WA	11,026	1,006	8
Canterbury-Bankstown	NSW	9,269	917	2
Penrith	NSW	8,470	991	6
Cairns	QLD	6,182	981	6
Cumberland	NSW	5,991	904	2
Fairfield	NSW	5,907	814	1
Hume	VIC	5,719	941	3
Unincorporated ACT	ACT	5,246	1,071	10
Melton	VIC	5,194	985	6
Rockingham	WA	4,926	989	6
Central Coast	NSW	4,816	994	7
Sunshine Coast	QLD	4,613	1,022	8
Wanneroo	WA	4,552	1,005	8
Brimbank	VIC	4,365	912	2
Townsville	QLD	4,050	990	6
Redland	QLD	3,928	1,024	8
Parramatta	NSW	3,775	1,029	8
Camden	NSW	3,523	1,045	9
Bayside	NSW	3,449	1,004	7
Swan	WA	3,423	995	7
Whittlesea	VIC	3,330	990	6

Source: ABS (2021), SEIFA.

\*All LGAs with 3,000+ persons were included in the analysis.

# 4. KEY FINDINGS

## 4.1 Demographic trends

Up to 1.6% of the total Australian population is made up of Pasifika peoples, demonstrating an increase of 0.6% since 2011. The Pasifika community remains a youthful population with higher percentages of Pasifika peoples ranging in age from 0–29 years, whereas in 2011, more Pasifika peoples were in the 0–24-year bracket.<sup>19</sup> In comparison, higher percentages of the general Australian population are aged between 25 and 54 years. However, Pasifika peoples in Australia still have a lower life expectancy when compared with the general population with significant declines in the 70+ age brackets for Pasifika peoples<sup>20</sup> (Figure 4.1). This places Pasifika people’s life expectancy well below the current national average of 83 years of age.<sup>21</sup>



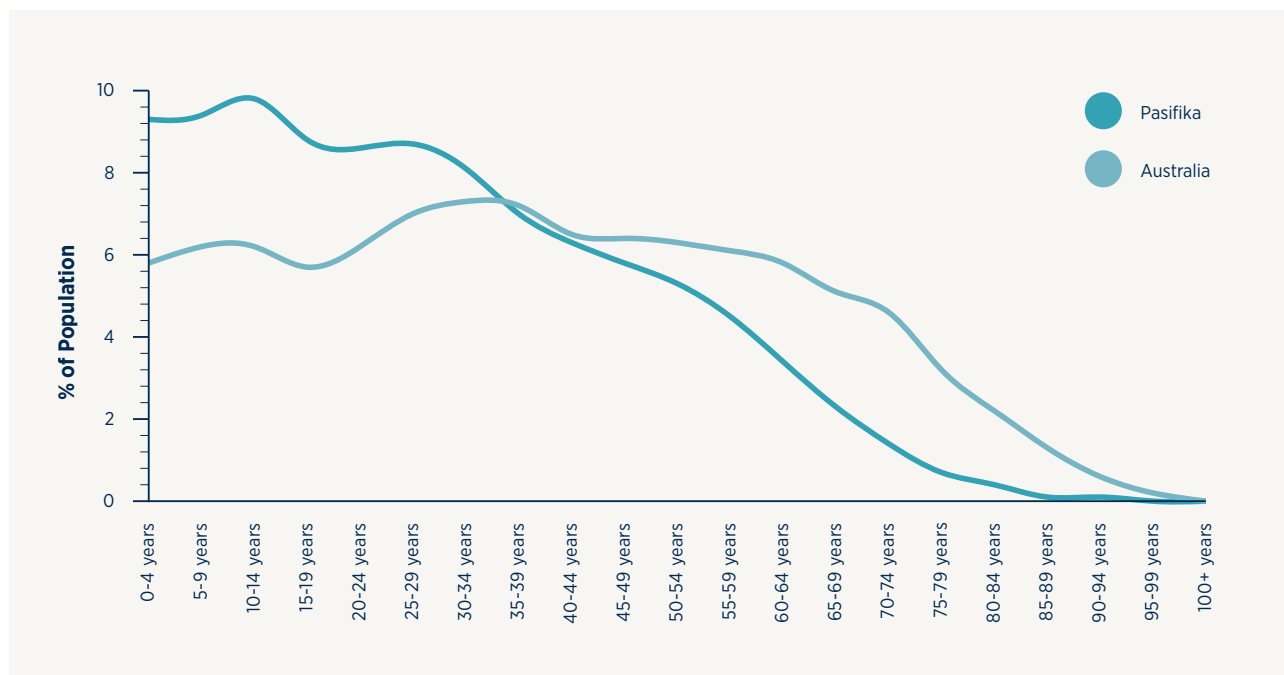
**PASIFIKA  
70 YEARS+  
2.7%**



**AUS  
70 YEARS+  
12.1%**

**LOWER LIFE EXPECTANCY**

**FIGURE 4.1: (AGE5P) AGE IN FIVE YEAR GROUPS, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



<sup>19</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>20</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>21</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2022).



Since 2011 there has been a 4% increase in Australian citizenship among the Pasifika population and a 1.4% increase in the not Australian classification. However, the change in the 'Not stated' classification from 3.1% to 0.6% may partially contribute to the difference in these figures. According to the 2021 census, just under half (44%) of the Pasifika population in Australia are not Australian citizens (Figure 4.2). As noted in the previous report, because of changes to citizenship legislation in 2007, it is more likely that Pasifika peoples who arrived in Australia between 1970 and 2010 have higher rates of Australian citizenship or permanent residency.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, since 1986 children born in Australia may only acquire Australian citizenship if either one or both of their parents are Australian citizens or permanent residents, or if they have resided in Australia for a minimum of 10 years from their date of birth.<sup>23</sup>

However, recent changes to Australian citizenship eligibility may affect these trends from July 2023 onwards. Through this new pathway program, New Zealand citizens who have resided in Australia for four years with permanent residency for at least 12 months are now eligible for

citizenship.<sup>24</sup> These changes may result in higher levels of university education attainment among Pasifika youth from New Zealand.

Notwithstanding recent changes, Pasifika peoples without citizenship or permanent residency are not eligible for government benefits. Furthermore, changes to Centrelink eligibility policies over two decades ago in 2001 have resulted in New Zealand citizens being ineligible for assistance unless they gain Australian citizenship. This results in significant pressures around finding and maintaining secure employment for almost half of the Pasifika population,<sup>25</sup> which could have detrimental effects on Pasifika families, who are often more likely to have more children to support than the general population (Figure 4.18).

Citizenship status may also affect education pathways among Pasifika youth. For example, research found that Pasifika youth with New Zealand citizenship were less likely than Pasifika peoples with Australian citizenship to complete a university education.<sup>26</sup>

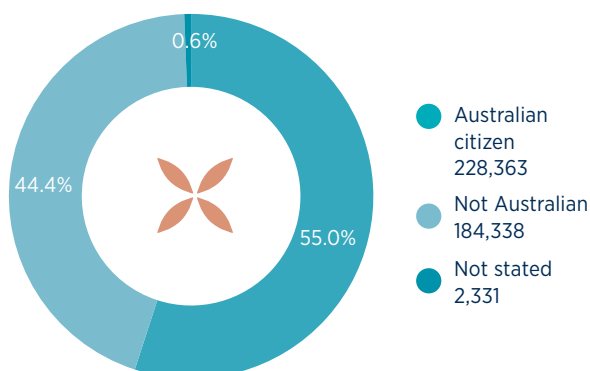
## AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP STATUS

**PASIFIKA**  
55.0%

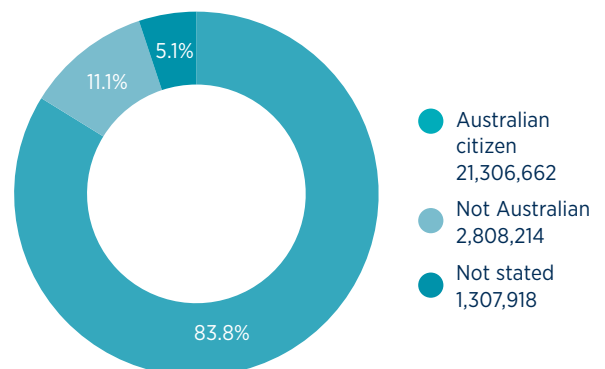


**AUS**  
83.8%

**FIGURE 4.2 (CITP) AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP STATUS, PASIFIKA POPULATION, 2021**



**FIGURE 4.3 (CITP) AUSTRALIAN CITIZENSHIP STATUS, AUSTRALIAN POPULATION, 2021**



<sup>22</sup> Klapdor, Coombs and Bohm (2009); Ravulo (2015).

<sup>23</sup> Federal Register of Legislation (2007).

<sup>24</sup> Department of Home Affairs (2023).

<sup>25</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>26</sup> Kearney and Glenn (2017).

Approximately one-quarter of Pasifika families have a natural or adopted child under the age of 15 (24.6%), representing a 3% decrease since 2011 and broader trends of smaller family sizes. In comparison, 15.8% of Australia's general population have a natural or adopted child under the age of 15 (Figure 4.4), representing a less significant (1.1%) decrease since 2011. In addition, Pasifika families have a slightly higher rate for non-dependent adopted or natural children at 7.9%, compared with 5.4% of the general population.

### CHILDREN AGED UNDER 15

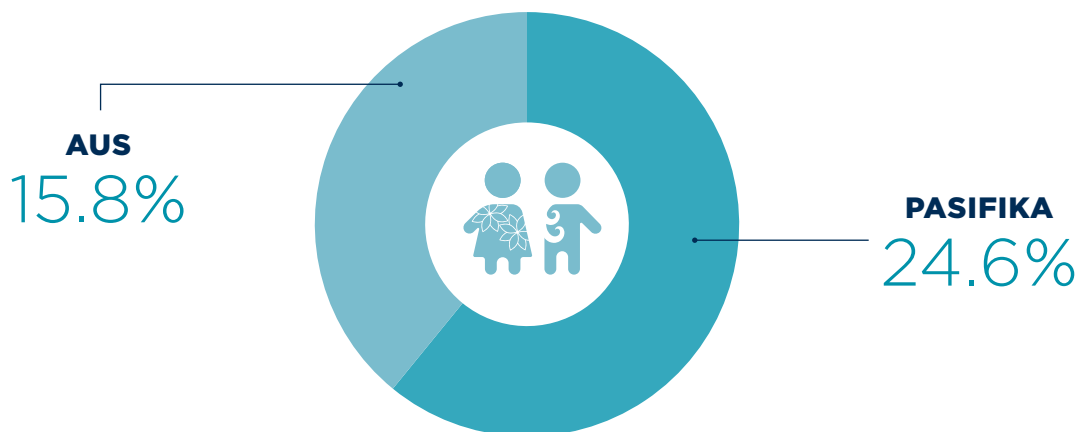


FIGURE 4.4: (RLHP) RELATIONSHIP IN HOUSEHOLD – CHILDREN, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021

In contrast with the general Australian population, Pasifika households are more likely to consist of multiple families rather than lone individuals (Figure 4.5).<sup>27</sup> This reflects a long-held tradition among Pasifika communities of living in extended-family, multigenerational households, in which grandparents are often closely involved in raising grandchildren. However, it is important to note that the percentage of lone-person households has increased by 1% in the Pasifika population and 1.6% in the Australian population since 2011.

### LONE PERSON HOUSEHOLDS

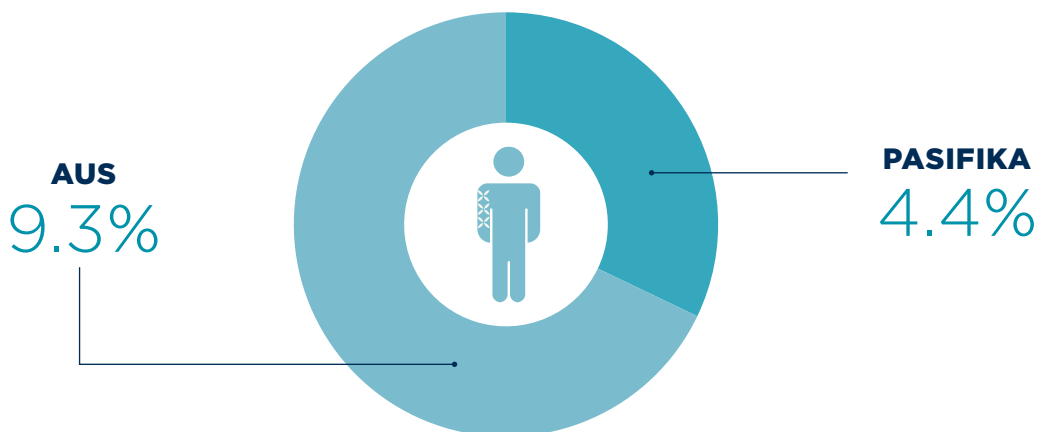


FIGURE 4.5: (RLHP) RELATIONSHIP IN HOUSEHOLD – LONE PERSON, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021

<sup>27</sup> Howden-Chapman et al. (2023); Pene et al. (2009).

## 4.2 Education

Education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals and communities by providing the necessary knowledge, skills and opportunities for personal growth, social mobility and economic progress.<sup>28</sup> Access to high-quality education is essential for improving the overall wellbeing of families and is linked to economic empowerment, promoting social integration and cultural preservation, better health outcomes, fostering community development and breaking intergenerational cycles of disadvantage.<sup>29</sup>

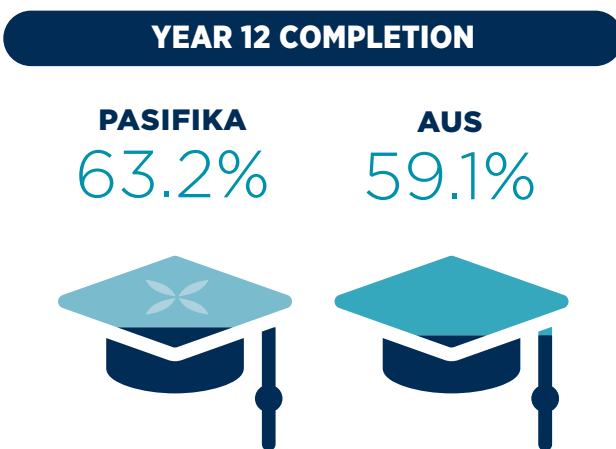
However, extensive research has identified a broad range of obstacles and difficulties that impede Pasifika communities' ability to access and participate in quality education. Findings from a recent scoping review of empirical research on the educational successes and challenges to achieving educational success for Pasifika learners included:<sup>30</sup>

1. lack of access to permanent residency and/or Australian citizenship
2. constraints on post-compulsory educational opportunities for the learner
3. lack of professional learning and development for intercultural understanding and intercultural capabilities.

In addition to these systemic barriers, research has identified a wide range of internal and external factors limiting education attainment rates among Pasifika population in Australia.<sup>31</sup> Internally, cultural beliefs surrounding suitable career choices, a lack of role models and the challenge of comparing the long-term benefits of higher education with immediate employment prospects contribute to limited access to higher education among Pasifika youth. For example, Pasifika youth report a desire to support their families, and larger families including more dependent children may result in a pressure for youth to work full-time instead of pursuing further study.<sup>32</sup> Most significantly, systemic barriers such as limited resources and opportunities, along with societal expectations that perpetuate existing social and economic disparities, discourage upward mobility and limit aspirations for higher education.<sup>33</sup>

Since 2011, there has been a significant increase in the percentage of the population who have completed Year 12 or equivalent in both the general Australian and the Pasifika populations. More than half of the general Australian population and the Pasifika population over the age of 18 have completed Year 12 or equivalent. This suggests a broader cultural trend within Australia to complete higher levels of secondary schooling,<sup>34</sup> which can be enabled by learning environments that allow students to freely express who they are.

In 2011, 38.4% of Australia's general population and 33.3% of Pasifika peoples over the age of 18 completed Year 12 or equivalent.<sup>35</sup> In 2021, these figures grew to 59.1% and 63.2% respectively. This places the percentage of the Pasifika population to complete Year 12 or equivalent above that of the general Australian population. Moreover, Pasifika peoples have slightly higher rates of both Year 11 and Year 12 completion, whereas the general Australian population has higher rates of Year 10 completion. These figures may be the result of the general population taking up trade through an apprenticeship pathway or entering the workforce after completing Year 10 while higher percentages of the Pasifika community continued to complete Year 11 or Year 12 (Figure 4.6).<sup>36</sup> These changes suggest a shift in the importance Pasifika communities place on high school completion, which may be a result of the growth in university-targeted outreach activities.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the higher rates of Year 12 completion suggest there are now increased opportunities for Pasifika peoples to pursue higher education. Despite these increased opportunities, participation in university study remains lower among Pasifika peoples (Figure 4.7), suggesting the need to identify and develop targeted interventions that address the persisting barriers to university education uptake among Pasifika peoples.<sup>38</sup>



<sup>28</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>29</sup> Davis and Robinson (2013).

<sup>30</sup> Pale et al. (2023).

<sup>31</sup> Ravulo (2018).

<sup>32</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>33</sup> Ravulo (2018).

<sup>34</sup> Examples of successful tertiary institutions that have been used to improve engagement and interest in studying include The Vaka Pasifika Outreach Program run at the Australian National University (ANU) from 2013 to 2014. This program, fully funded by ANU for high school students from Victoria, Canberra and Sydney to attend in person, was run by Pasifika undergraduate and postgraduate students, who provided engaging workshops showcasing what to expect when studying at tertiary institutions.

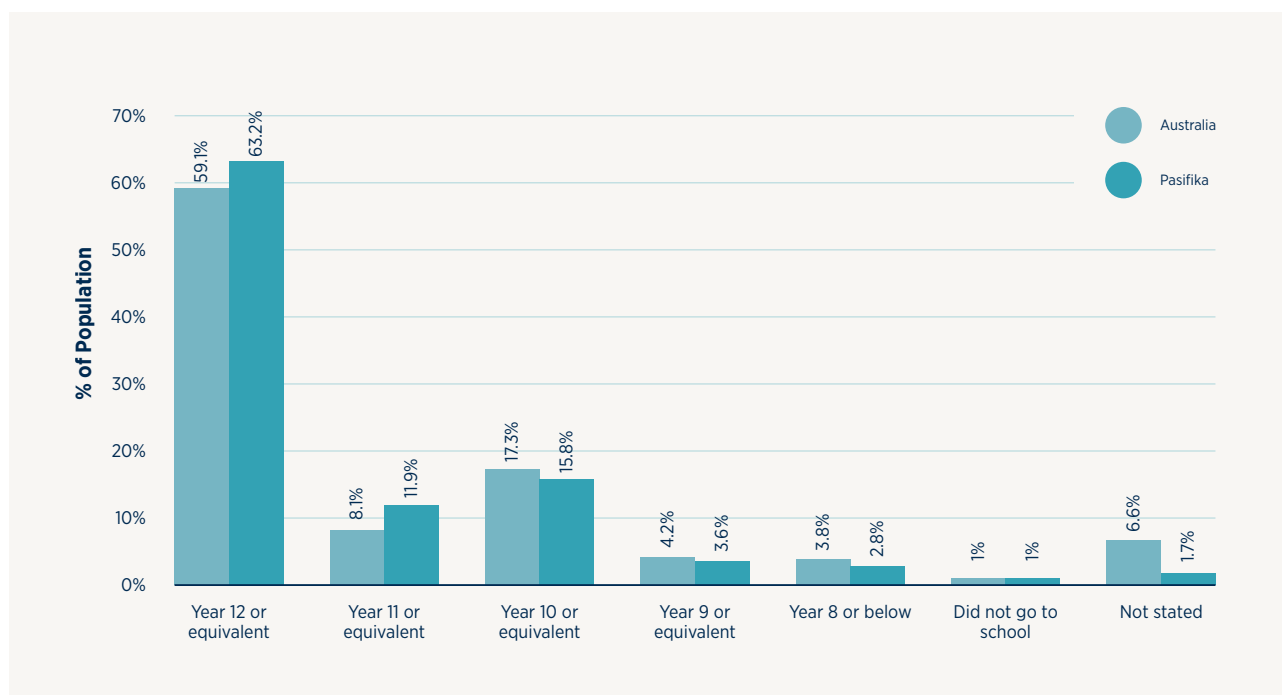
<sup>35</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>36</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>37</sup> Kearney and Donaghy (2010).

<sup>38</sup> See Ravulo (2018).

**FIGURE 4.6: (HSCP) HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED – BASED ON PEOPLE AGED 18+, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS 2021**



\*Percentage calculated with total applicable population (18+ years).

Since 2011, both cohorts have seen increases in non-school qualifications, suggesting a broader cultural trend towards higher education attainment. Consistent with 2011 findings, significantly higher percentages of the general Australian population hold a bachelor's degree or above, while the Pasifika population are largely undertaking certificate-level education (Figure 4.7).<sup>39</sup> This trend may be attributed to increased job opportunities available for trade qualifications<sup>40</sup> or an inability of non-citizens to access HECS-HELP<sup>41</sup> for more expensive higher education degrees.

Higher proportions of Pasifika peoples are engaged in education within early childhood, primary and secondary levels (Figure 4.8); however, they remain less likely to participate in university studies when compared with the general population since 2011.<sup>42</sup>

Further examination of these trends has found that barriers to education can be addressed through a range of enablers, including high-quality school education, positive Pasifika role models, alignment between teachers and learners, tailored support at different educational levels for individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds, community-driven initiatives, quality school education, parental support and a stronger connection between qualifications and desired employment opportunities.<sup>43</sup>

Targeted interventions and programs that provide socio-economic support, particularly for those first in family to attend university,<sup>44</sup> from early years of education can effectively address barriers that manifest throughout secondary schooling, and improve university retention rates that are often affected by conflicting priorities of the cost of education and the cost of supporting families.<sup>45</sup> This has been found to be most effectively achieved through collaborative partnerships between the education sector and Pasifika communities in Australia.<sup>46</sup> Importantly, opportunities for Pasifika to engage in educative activities are enabled by tailoring approaches to preferred learning needs through a suite of pedagogical methods that empower Pasifika to use knowledge of both traditional and Western ideals to express their individuality and incorporate Pasifika methodologies.<sup>47</sup> This is most successful when supplemented by cultural spaces that Pasifika staff support, incorporating traditional artworks and artefacts, and valuing and acknowledging social space relationships, which are all imperative in empowering Pasifika communities to succeed in tertiary settings, such as in New Zealand.



<sup>39</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>40</sup> National Skills Commission (2021).

<sup>41</sup> Australian Government (2023).

<sup>42</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>43</sup> Kearney et al. (2008), Fletcher and Dobrenov-Major (2008); Ponton (2015); Ravulo (2018).

<sup>44</sup> Kearney and Glenn (2017).

<sup>45</sup> Pale et al. (2023); Ravulo (2019).



<sup>46</sup> Pale et al. (2023).

<sup>47</sup> Mila-Schaaf (2010); Mila-Schaaf et al. (2000).



For example, to encourage a sense of belonging and acceptance of cultural values and practices, Brisbane law firm Caxton Legal Centre Inc. provided a document for families to share with educational institutions. This

supported the continued practice of wearing taonga (artefacts of significance) in spaces that otherwise banned these or in some instances where hair length could not be grown in accordance with cultural practices.<sup>48</sup>



**PASIFIKA**  
23.5%   
**AUS**  
41.6% 

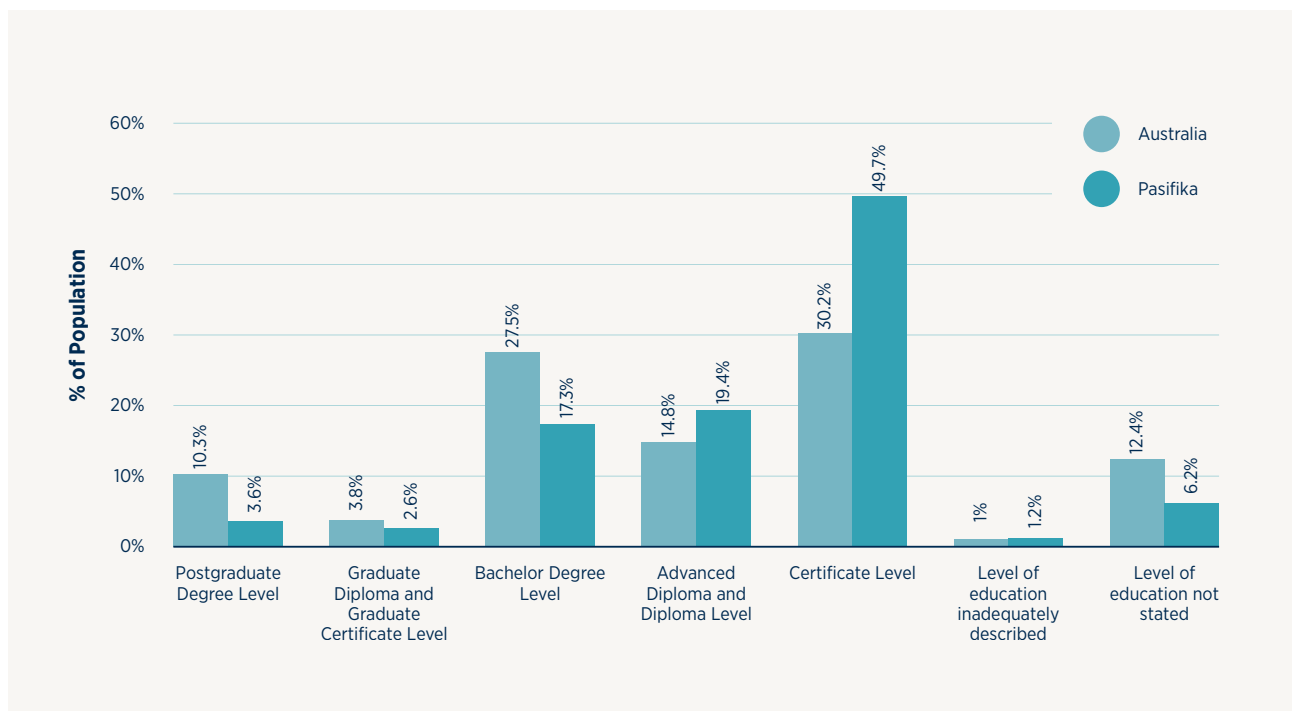


**PASIFIKA**  
49.7%   
**AUS**  
30.2% 

**BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR ABOVE**

**CERTIFICATE LEVEL**

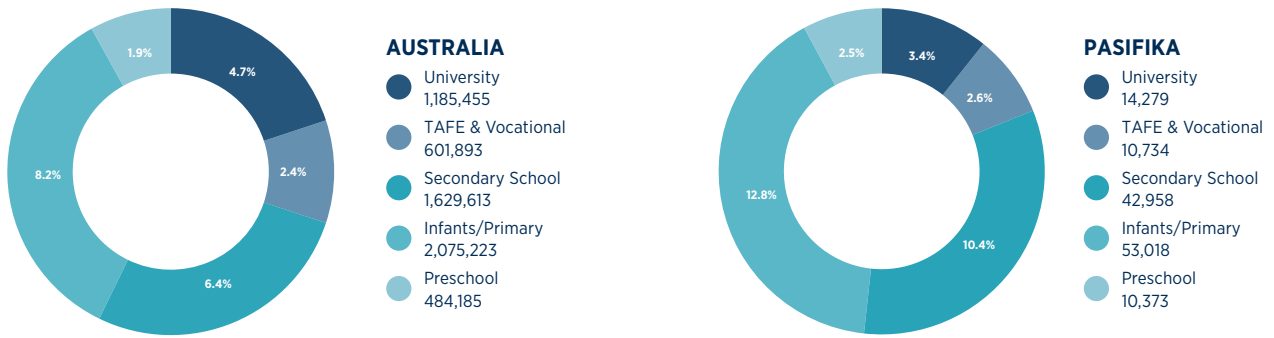
**FIGURE 4.7: (QALLP) NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION: LEVEL OF EDUCATION, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentages calculated from total applicable population (persons holding qualification).

<sup>48</sup> Caxton Legal Centre (2023).

**FIGURE 4.8: (TYSTAP) EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION: ATTENDEE STATUS, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated using total population from each cohort (Australia/Pasifika)

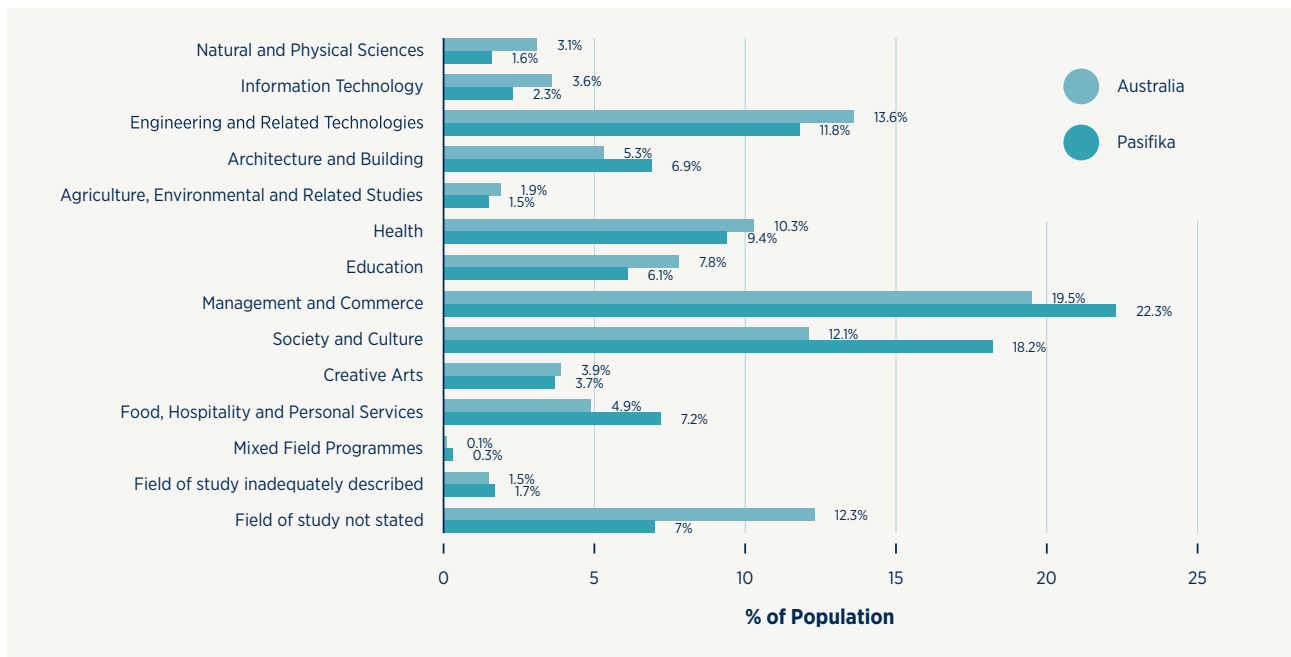
Consistent with figures in 2011, the most common fields of study in order of popularity within Australia’s Pasifika community are management and commerce, society and culture, and engineering and related technologies. The limited participation of Pasifika peoples in creative arts studies (Figure 4.9) has also persisted, despite strong cultural connection to the arts within Pasifika

communities.<sup>49</sup> These trends, in line with the broader Australian population, suggest there may be a preference for pursuing business and financial careers that promise higher income and better employment opportunities, not only in accordance with available courses and current demand in respective professional fields, but also to provide familial financial support.<sup>50</sup>

**TOP 3 FIELDS OF STUDY AMONG PASIFIKA POPULATION**



**FIGURE 4.9: (QALFP) NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION: FIELD OF STUDY, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated using total applicable population (persons holding qualification).

<sup>49</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>50</sup> National Skills Commission (2021).

# 4.3 Employment

Consistent with 2011 data, fewer Pasifika peoples fall into higher income brackets, such as those earning more than \$1,250 per week (Figure 4.10). In addition, Pasifika peoples are working similar hours to the general Australian population (Figure 4.11), but earn less.<sup>51</sup>

Almost double the general Australian population earn \$2,000+ or more per week in comparison with the Pasifika population. These differences may be attributed to the type of employment Pasifika communities are engaged in (Figure 4.12).

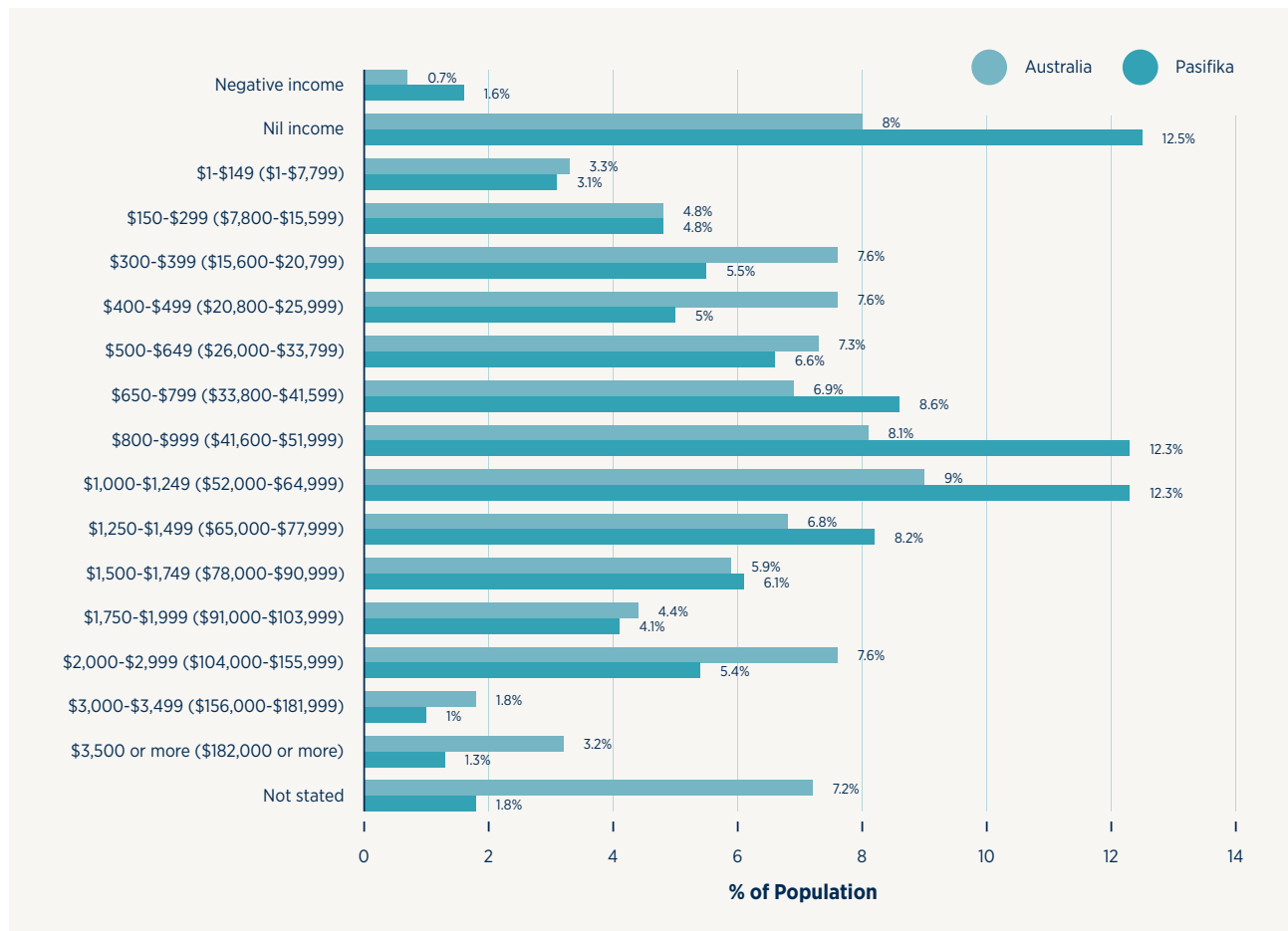
## PERSONAL WEEKLY INCOME - \$2000+ PER WEEK

**PASIFIKA**  
7.7%



**AUS**  
12.6%

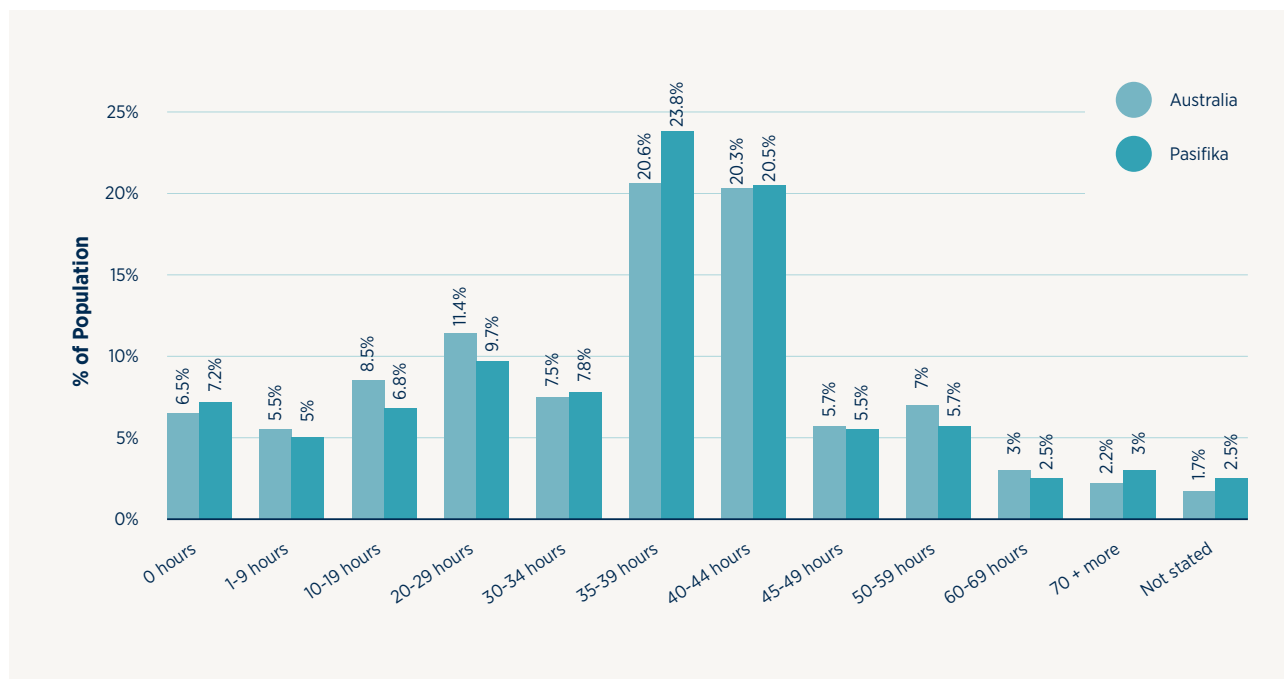
**FIGURE 4.10: (INCP) TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME (GROSS, WEEKLY), PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS 2021**



\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population.

<sup>51</sup> Ravulo (2015).

**FIGURE 4.11: (HRWRP) HOURS WORKED (RANGES), PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population.

\*Percentages for both cohorts have approximately doubled. Percentages in the previous report may have been calculated from a different total.

The highest industry of employment is the health care and social assistance industry (12.9%), which is also the highest industry of employment for the general population (14.5%). Consistent with trends in 2011, construction (10.6%), manufacturing (9.3%), postal and warehousing (8.8%) have higher rates of Pasifika peoples employed. Half the rate of Pasifika peoples are represented in the professional, scientific and technical services industries (3.5%) compared with that of the Australian population (7.8%) and more than double the rate of the Australian population are in education and training, with 4.6% of the Pasifika communities in comparison with 8.8% of the general Australian population (Figure 4.12).<sup>52</sup>

There are also gendered employment trends in the way Pasifika women and men work (Table 4.1). The highest industry of employment for Pasifika women is health care and social assistance (9.7%) and construction for Pasifika men (9.0%). Additionally, Pasifika peoples under the age of 30 have higher rates of employment in the retail trade (13.8%) and accommodation and food services (13.3%) than the general Pasifika population.

These trends may be the result of systemic barriers and challenges. A New Zealand study found that Pasifika

early career academics employed at universities felt their cultural knowledge and perspectives were undervalued and underacknowledged within university settings.<sup>53</sup> This may contribute to the disparity in employment within the education and training industry, along with additional barriers that must be examined. Further research on Pasifika teaching practices in higher educational settings in Australia is required, including exploring the need for Pasifika programs and Indigenous methodologies. In addition, there is a need for further resources and support for those undertaking learning and employment through Early Career Academic (ECA) pathways when transitioning into predominantly Eurocentric workplaces. Some examples of possible support are providing Pasifika mentors to guide ECAs from commencement over a three-year period until they become independent academics, reflecting a similar mentorship model to that provided for students in tertiary education. These initiatives must be supported through consistent and ongoing funding of support for Pasifika students and initiatives.<sup>54</sup>



<sup>52</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>53</sup> Thomsen et al. (2021).

<sup>54</sup> Nanai et al. (2017)



## INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT

### PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES INDUSTRIES



**PASIFIKA** 3.5% **AUS** 7.8%

### EDUCATION AND TRAINING



**PASIFIKA** 4.6% **AUS** 8.8%

### GENDERED INDUSTRIES

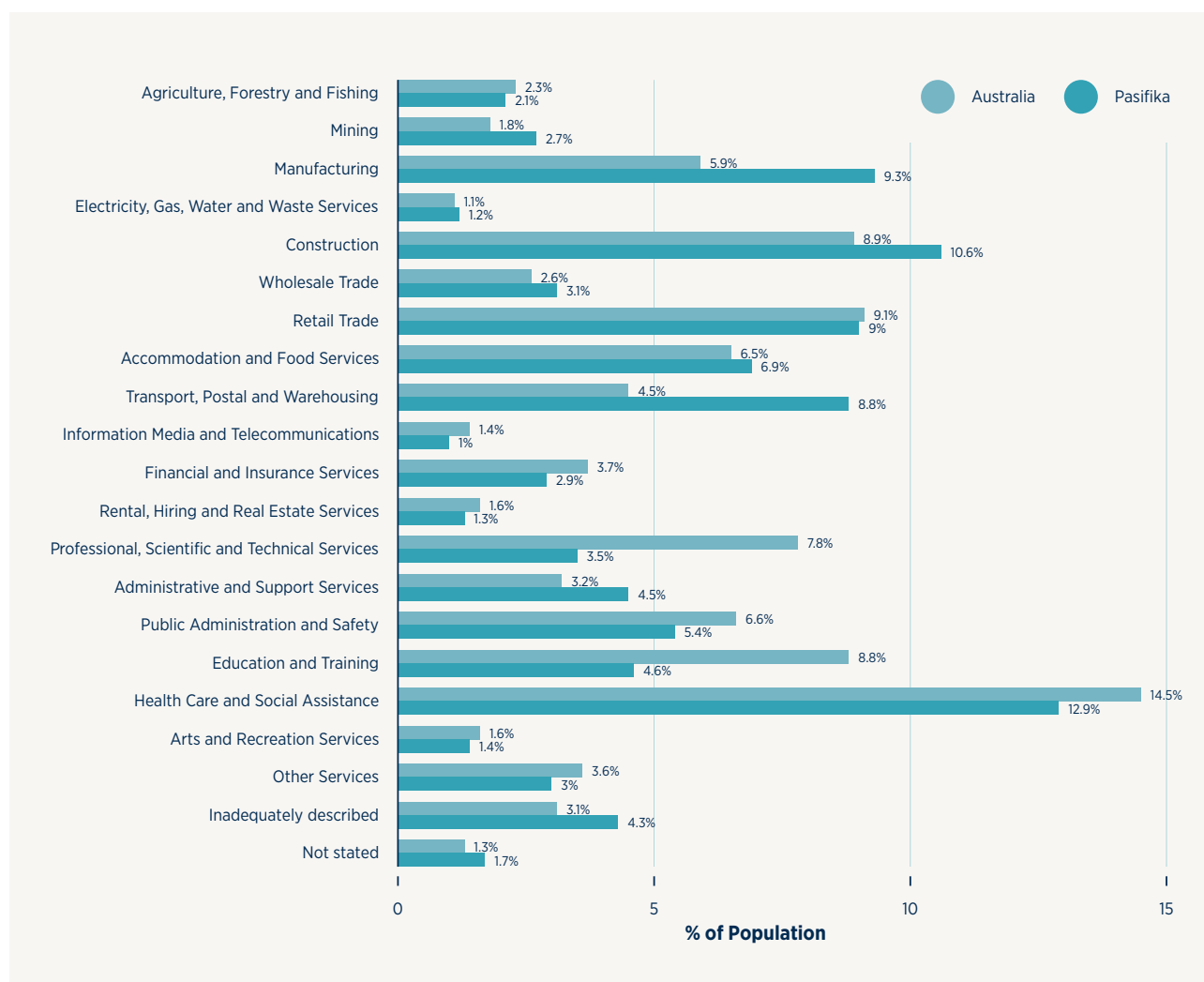


**Pasifika Men:**  
**CONSTRUCTION**  
9.6%



**Pasifika Women:**  
**HEALTHCARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE**  
9.7%

FIGURE 4.12: (INDP) INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021



\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population.

**TABLE 4.1: (INDP) INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT, PASIFIKA PEOPLES, BY GENDER AND UNDER 30 YEARS OF AGE, 2021**

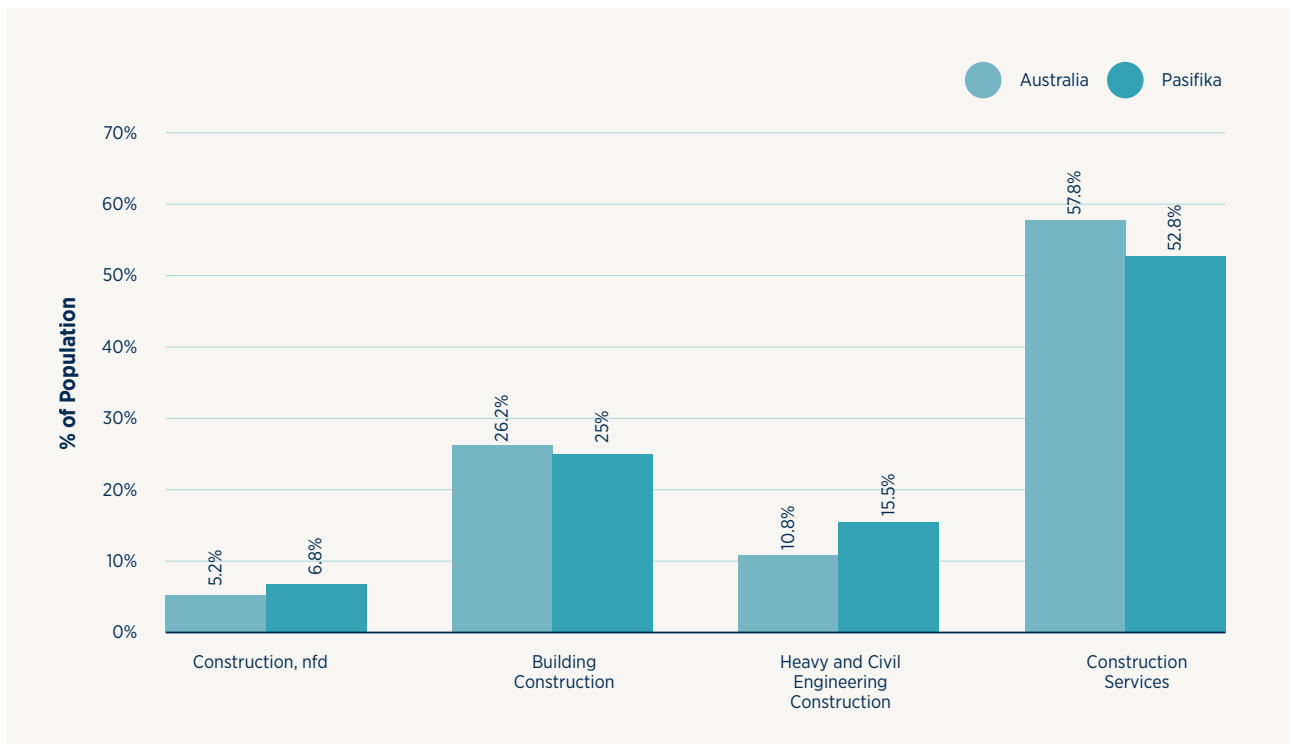
	% PASIFIKA > 30 YR	% FEMALE PASIFIKA	% MALE PASIFIKA
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	2.2	0.6	1.4
Mining	1.6	0.6	2.0
Manufacturing	8.1	2.9	5.9
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.8	0.3	0.9
Construction	11.1	1.1	9.0
Wholesale trade	2.8	1.1	1.8
Retail trade	13.9	5.0	3.5
Accommodation and food services	13.3	4.1	2.4
Transport, postal and warehousing	7.6	2.7	5.7
Information media and telecommunications	0.9	0.5	0.5
Financial and insurance services	2.3	1.9	0.9
Rental, hiring and real estate services	1.1	0.6	0.6
Professional, scientific and technical services	2.8	1.7	1.6
Administrative and support services	4.2	2.4	1.9
Public administration and safety	3.6	2.5	2.6
Education and training	3.6	3.2	1.2
Health care and social assistance	9.0	9.7	2.5
Arts and recreation services	1.9	0.7	0.7
Other services	3.0	1.3	1.5
Inadequately described	4.4	1.5	2.6
Not stated	2.1	0.7	0.9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\*percentage calculated from total applicable population.

Almost 2% of Australia's construction industry workers are of Pasifika ancestry. In the construction industry, a larger proportion of Pasifika peoples are employed in heavy and civil engineering (15.5%). In contrast, a larger portion of the general Australian population (10.8%) is employed in building construction or construction services (Figure 4.13).

Since 2011, there has been a 1% increase in the general Australian population and a 0.8% decrease of Pasifika peoples working in the heavy and civil engineering sector, while the building construction sector has seen a slight decrease across both cohorts. Conversely, construction services experienced a slight increase in 2021. It is important to note that the percentage of 'construction nfd' increased by more than 2% for each cohort, which may account for some variability in figures.

**FIGURE 4.13: (INDP) INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT – CONSTRUCTION, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS 2021**



\*Percentage calculated as a percentage of people employed in construction from each cohort (Australia/Pasifika)

Pasifika communities are more likely to work full-time (40.3%) compared with the general Australian population (34.1%). Approximately equal proportions of the general Australian population (19.1%) and the Pasifika population (19.3%) are employed part-time. This suggests Pasifika communities either prefer full-time employment or they have an increased necessity for full-time employment; this is also evident in the 3.1% (nearly double) who are unemployed but seeking this level of paid work (Figure 4.14).

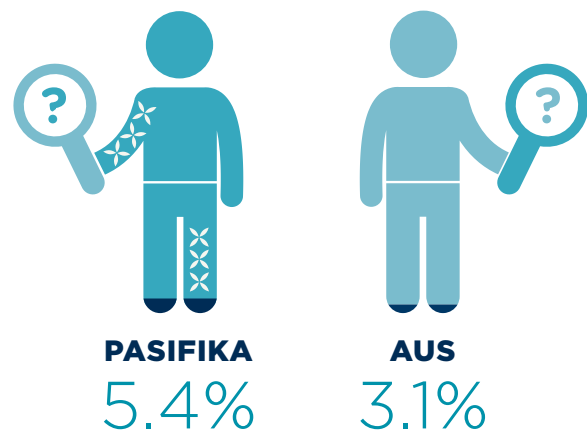
In 2011, both the general Australian and the Pasifika populations had equal proportions of people employed full-time and a significant difference in part-time employment. In 2021, the findings are inverse, with nearly equal proportions employed part-time and a larger proportion of the Pasifika population employed full-time.

Importantly, for those who are unemployed or not in the labour force, approximately 82,337 (84.1%) are on some form of government assistance and 15,567 (15.9%) do not receive assistance. Comparatively, across the general Australian population who are unemployed or not in the labour force, 80.6% receive government assistance and 19.4% do not receive government assistance.

Both cohorts of those who are unemployed or not in the labour force saw significant increases in the proportion

of people not in the labour force or employed, away from work. However, this difference may be due to discrepancies in data calculations or COVID-19 lockdowns at the time of collection of census data.<sup>55</sup> These higher rates of Pasifika people unemployed and seeking employment reflect similar disproportionate COVID-19-related impact on employment and income levels of Pasifika communities in New Zealand.<sup>56</sup>

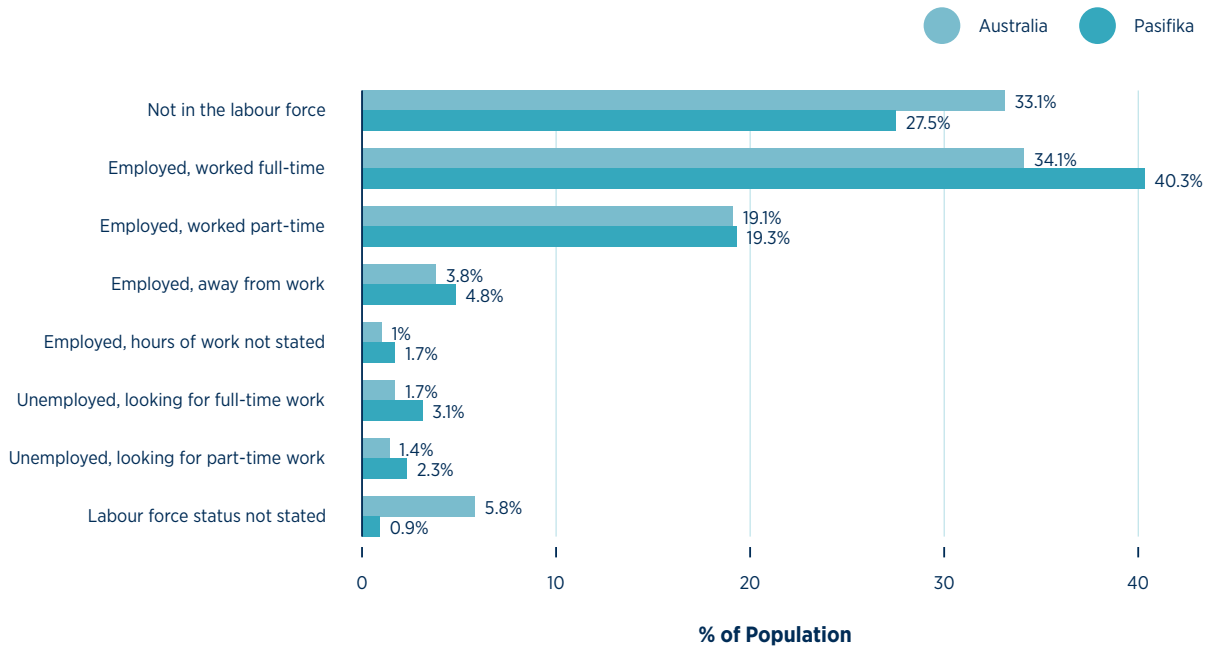
### UNEMPLOYED AND LOOKING FOR WORK



<sup>55</sup> The current data uses the total applicable population to calculate the percentage of the population.

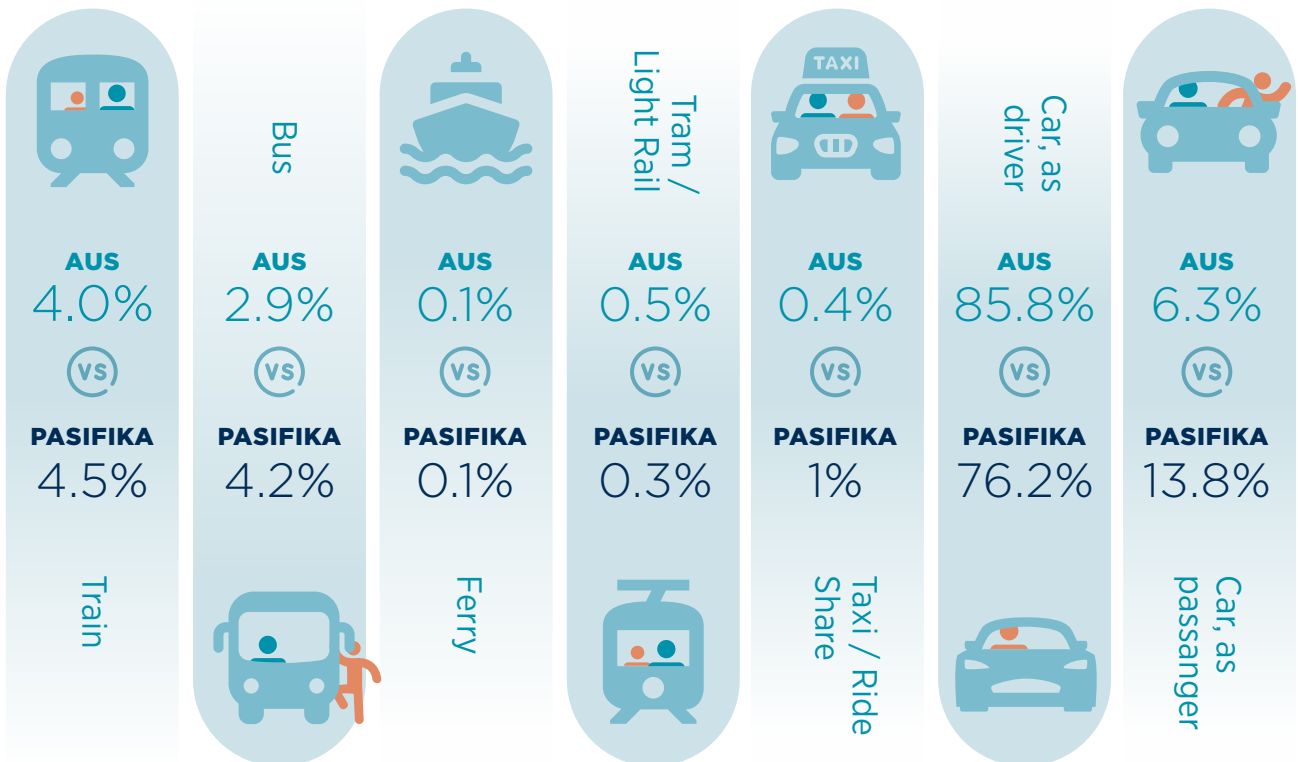
<sup>56</sup> Pacheco et al. (2022).

**FIGURE 4.14: (LFHRP) LABOUR FORCE STATUS AND HOURS WORKED NOT STATED, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated from the total applicable population including those not in the labour force.

### METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK



**FIGURE 4.15: (MTWP) METHOD OF TRAVEL TO WORK, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

\*Percentages calculated from the total of included methods of travel to work.



*Photography by Sally Tsoutas*

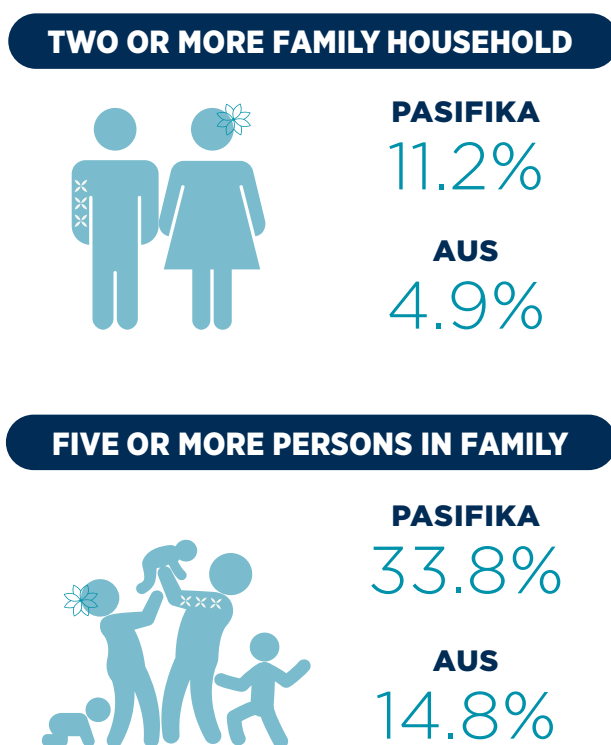
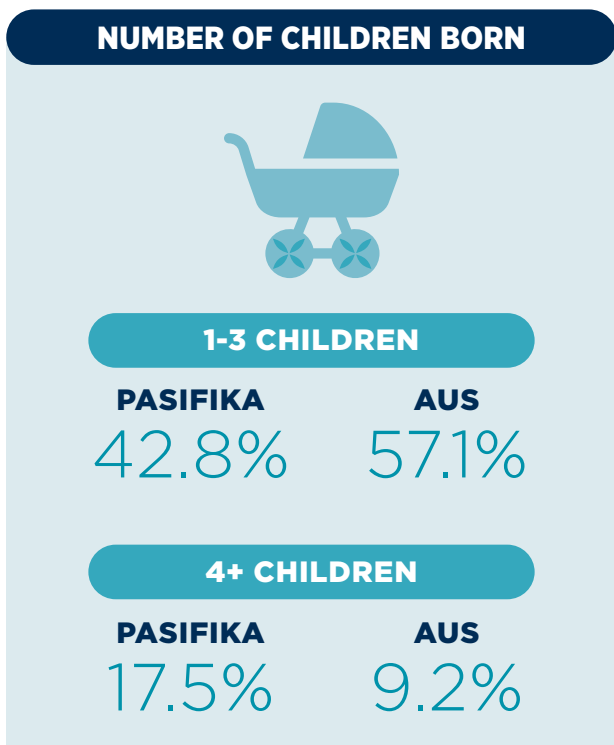
As demonstrated in the 2021 census data, Pasifika communities in Australia continue to face challenges in employment equity, with lower incomes despite similar working hours to those of the general population and a concentration in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and postal and warehousing. The reported undervaluing of cultural knowledge in academic settings could pose additional barriers in certain professional sectors, such as education and training. The higher proportion of full-time employment and unemployment rates in Pasifika communities suggests an increased

necessity for stable work. Yet, systemic issues such as transportation connectivity could further limit employment and education opportunities. Moreover, the disparities in unpaid domestic work potentially signify changing family and work dynamics within these communities. These findings highlight the need for further research and targeted interventions to address these persistent socio-economic disparities, particularly the role of education across all learning stages.

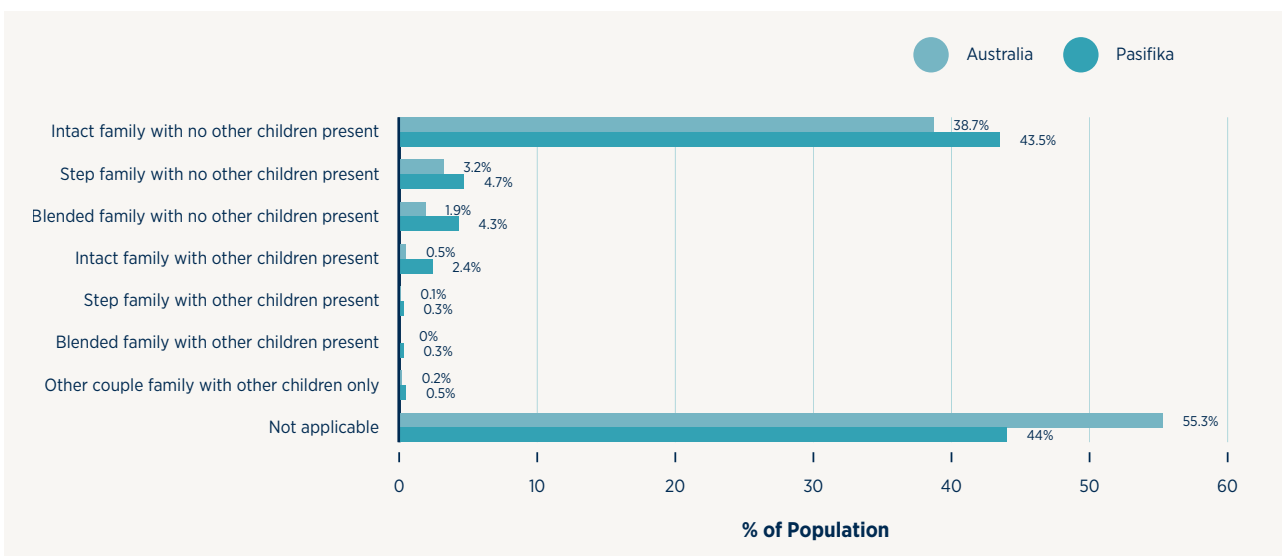
# 4.4 Family

Consistent with 2011 census data, intact families with children (2.4%) and those without children (43.5%) as well as blended families (4.6%) and stepfamilies (5%) are more common among Pasifika communities (Figure 4.16).<sup>57</sup> In addition, the 2021 census demonstrated that the number of children in Pasifika families has not shifted over the decade between 2011 and 2021. There

are higher percentages of Pasifika families represented in the 4–10 children categories than the average Australian population (Figure 4.17). Interestingly, a larger percentage of Pasifika families have no children when compared with the general population, which may reflect trends among Pasifika youth, who may be waiting longer to have children.



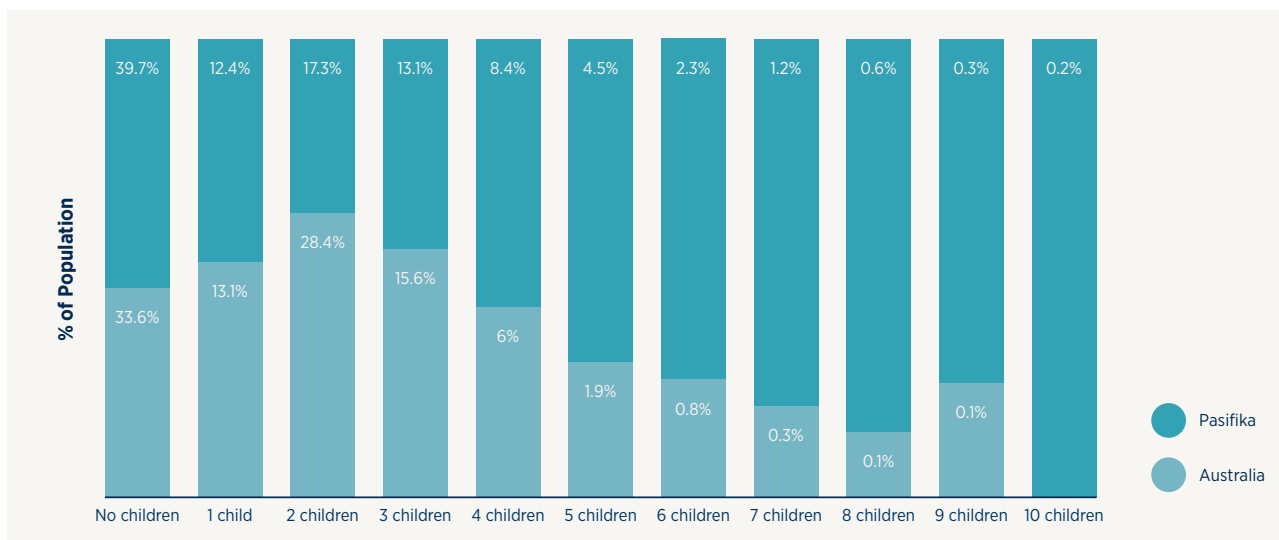
**FIGURE 4.16: (FBLF) FAMILY BLENDING, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated from total population for each cohort (Aus/Pac).

<sup>57</sup> Ravulo (2015).

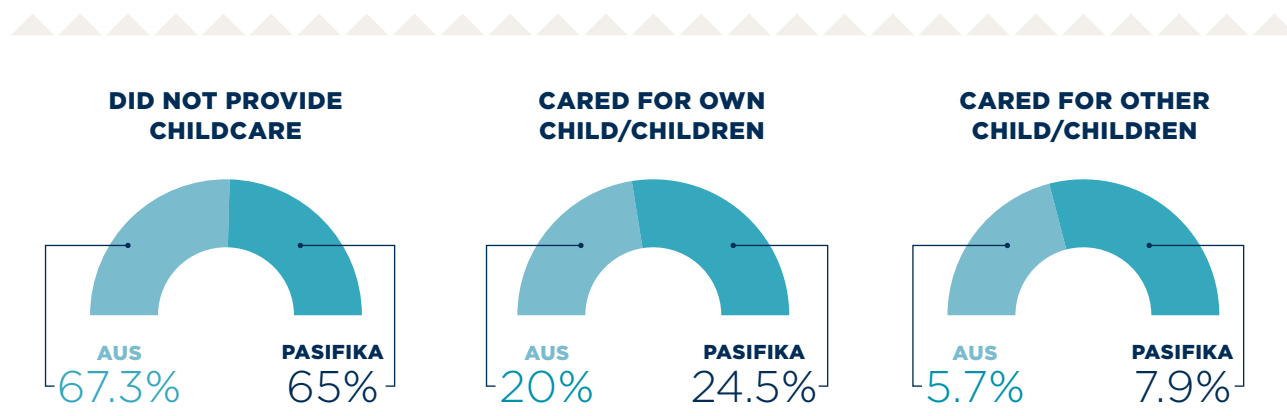
**FIGURE 4.17: (TISP) NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population.

The higher number of children typically found in Pasifika families indicates a greater level of childcare responsibility. Additionally, caring responsibilities for children are often shared among Pasifika families, which can be attributed to the larger size of Pasifika families and the cultural practice of communal sharing of childcare duties within Pasifika communities (Table 4.2).<sup>58</sup>

This pattern is consistent with the 2011 census data. However, there have been increases in percentages for both cohorts. This may be due to calculation differences, as well as the COVID-19 lockdowns at the time of data collection, which resulted in a higher demand for childcare provision among families as children participated in school from home.



**TABLE 4.2: (CHCAREP) UNPAID CHILD CARE, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

UNPAID CHILD CARE	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
Did not provide child care	13,978,698	67.3	193,068	65.0
Cared for own child/children	4,157,426	20.0	72,791	24.5
Cared for other child/children	1,183,912	5.7	23,408	7.9
Cared for own child/children and other child/children	130,423	0.6	3,584	1.2
Not stated	1,334,331	6.4	4,165	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,784,790</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>297,016</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population

<sup>58</sup> Ravulo (2015).

Consistent with 2011 census data, there are more couples with children under 15 (no dependent students or non-dependent children), including in the One-parent categories in the Pasifika population compared with the general Australian population (Table 4.3).<sup>59</sup> Additionally, there are relatively higher numbers of Pasifika families with children under 15 but no dependent students. This

may reflect a higher number of Pasifika families with infants who are not of primary school age.<sup>60</sup> A slightly larger percentage of the general Australian population since 2011 are couple families with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children. However, across the board, a higher percentage of Pasifika families have children under 15.

**TABLE 4.3: (FMCF) FAMILY COMPOSITION, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children	279,251	1.4	17,263	4.7
Couple family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children	1,333,941	6.6	29,049	7.9
Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children	334,626	1.7	17,700	4.8
Couple family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children	6,267,598	30.9	119,445	32.6
One-parent family with children under 15, dependent students and non-dependent children	71,298	0.4	4,017	1.1
One-parent family with children under 15, dependent students and no non-dependent children	257,930	1.3	7,639	2.1
One-parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and with non-dependent children	135,899	0.7	5,954	1.6
One-parent family with children under 15, no dependent students and no non-dependent children	1,056,762	5.2	34,067	9.3

\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population.

**TABLE 4.4: (CDCF) COUNT OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN IN FAMILY, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
Couple family with: No dependent children	1,681,923	11.9	28,063	9.2
Couple family with: One dependent child	2,828,656	20.0	50,758	16.6
Couple family with: Two dependent children	4,343,190	30.7	66,597	21.7
Couple family with: Three dependent children	1,826,004	12.9	45,437	14.8
Couple family with: Four dependent children	510,883	3.6	23,921	7.8
Couple family with: Five dependent children	129,122	0.9	10,634	3.5
Couple family with: Six or more dependent children	70,010	0.5	7,052	2.3
One-parent family with: No dependent children	869,793	6.1	15,050	4.9
One-parent family with: One dependent child	767,965	5.4	20,576	6.7
One-parent family with: Two dependent children	684,523	4.8	18,191	5.9
One-parent family with: Three dependent children	295,328	2.1	10,873	3.6
One-parent family with: Four dependent children	103,435	0.7	5,622	1.8
One-parent family with: Five dependent children	34,886	0.2	2,359	0.8
One-parent family with: Six or more dependent children	17,345	0.1	1,276	0.4
<b>Total Applicable</b>	<b>14,163,063</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>306,409</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Percentage calculated from total applicable population.

<sup>59</sup> Ravulo (2015).

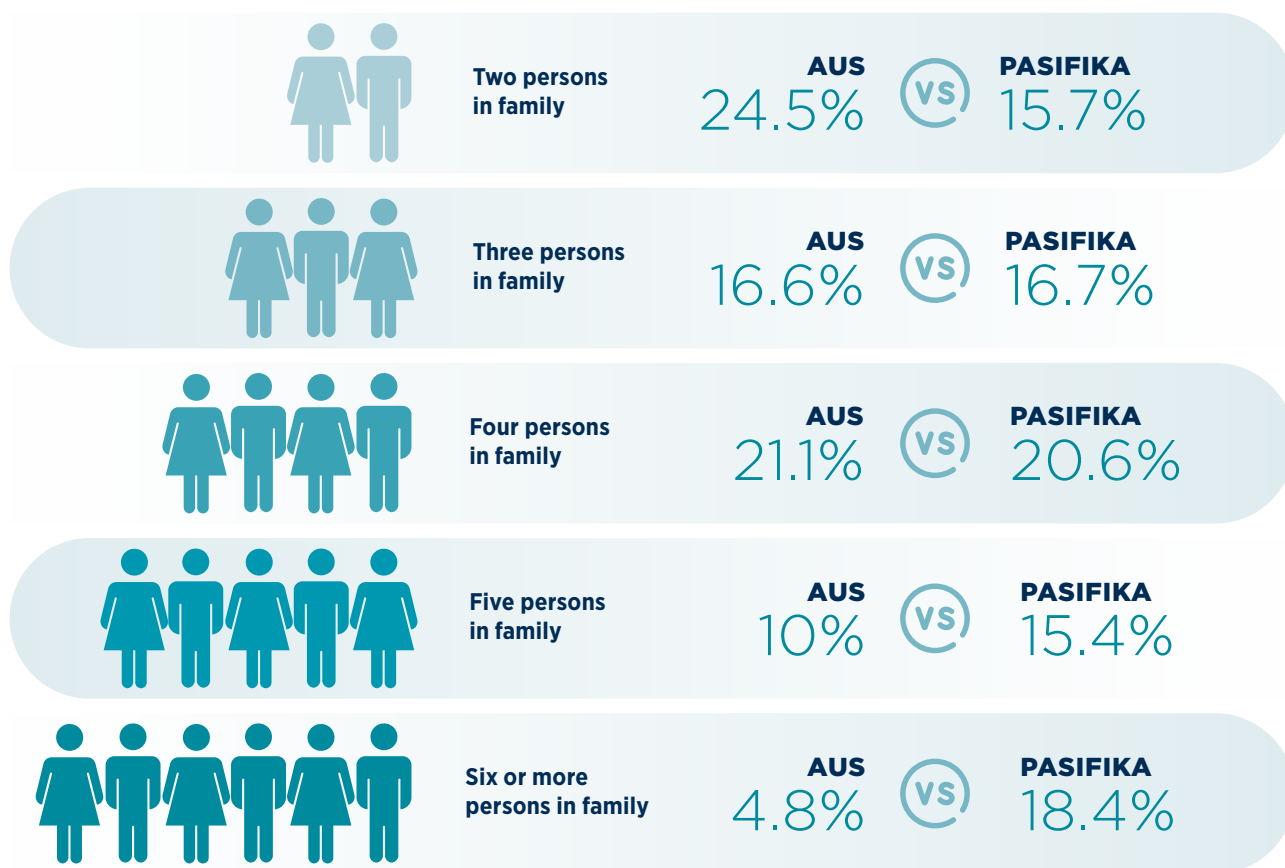
<sup>60</sup> Ravulo (2015).



Pasifika families are four times more likely to have six or more persons in a family (18.4%), compared with 4.8% of general Australian population (Figure 4.18).<sup>61</sup> However, there has been a 2.2% decrease in the proportion of the Pasifika population residing in such large families since 2011. In contrast, the general Australian population has experienced only a marginal decrease of 0.4% in this

category. Contributing factors towards reduced family size are yet to be determined; however, additional research into potential factors, such as cultural shifts, financial pressures and broader trends of declining fertility rates, could provide a more robust analysis of the observable trend towards smaller family sizes among the Pasifika population.<sup>62</sup>

**FIGURE 4.18: (CPRF) COUNT OF PERSONS IN FAMILY, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



Since 2011, the One family household: couple family with no children category has increased by 1.4%. However, this remains significantly lower for the Pasifika population (10%) in contrast with the general Australian population (19.3%).<sup>63</sup> In addition, the Pasifika population remains three times more represented than the general Australian household in the Two family household with children and the Three or more family household compositions.

As noted in the previous report of Pasifika communities in Australia, the presence of two or more families residing together in Pasifika households may be explained by a cultural proclivity for multiple families or generations sharing households; however, there is a need for further research into family compositions, including the role of cost-of-living and housing pressures, towards this trend.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>61</sup> Ravulo (2015).  
<sup>62</sup> Ravulo (2015).  
<sup>63</sup> Ravulo (2015).  
<sup>64</sup> Ravulo (2015).

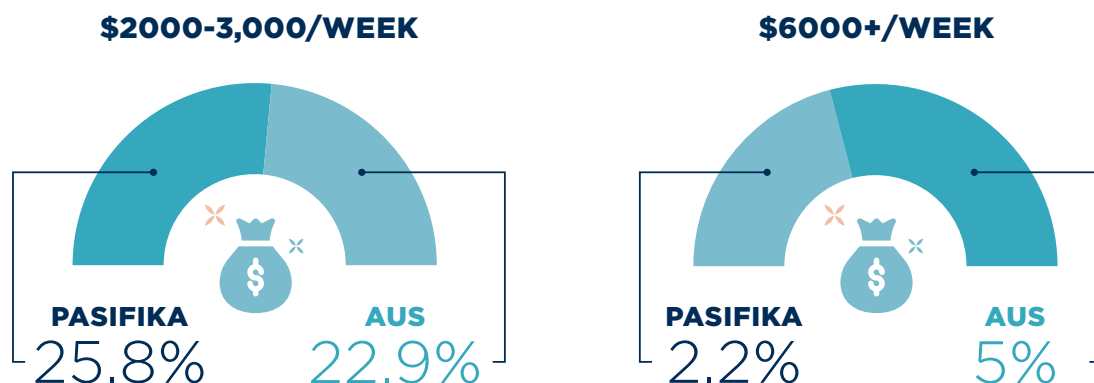
**TABLE 4.5: (HCFMF) FAMILY HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
One family household: Couple family with no children	4,915,757	19.3	41,320	10.0
One family household: Couple family with children	10,927,372	42.9	207,342	50.0
One family household: One-parent family	2,545,015	10.0	60,852	14.7
One family household: Other family	225,917	0.9	5,197	1.3
Two family household: Couple family with no children	289,498	1.1	6,752	1.6
Two family household: Couple family with children	428,928	1.7	22,412	5.4
Two family household: One-parent family	210,640	0.8	11,503	2.8
Two family household: Other family	4,273	0.0	220	0.1
Three or more family household: Couple family with no children	17,513	0.1	943	0.2
Three or more family household: Couple family with children	33,494	0.1	2,709	0.7
Three or more family household: One-parent family	17,623	0.1	1,594	0.4
Three or more family household: Other family	318	0.0	18	0.0
Not applicable	5,868,313	23.0	54,173	13.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,484,656</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>415,033</b>	<b>100</b>

A comparison of total weekly family income shows Pasifika families earn relatively on par with the general Australian population, although for income groups above the \$4,500–\$4,999 bracket, the proportion of Pasifika population diminishes more dramatically than the general population. For between \$1,250–\$1,499 and \$2,500–\$2,999, a slightly higher proportion of the Pasifika population earn within these brackets (Figure 4.19). A similar pattern is observed in the 2011 census data; however, the trend starts from the \$600–\$799 bracket and begins to decline after the \$2,000–\$2,499 bracket.<sup>65</sup> This change is likely to be expected when factoring in inflation and increases in the minimum wage over the decade.

As noted in Ravulo’s report on the 2011 census data, **Pasifika households typically have a higher number of earners within a single household. Therefore, the weekly income that a single family in the general Australian population may earn could require the combined earnings of one or more individuals residing in a Pasifika household.**<sup>66</sup>

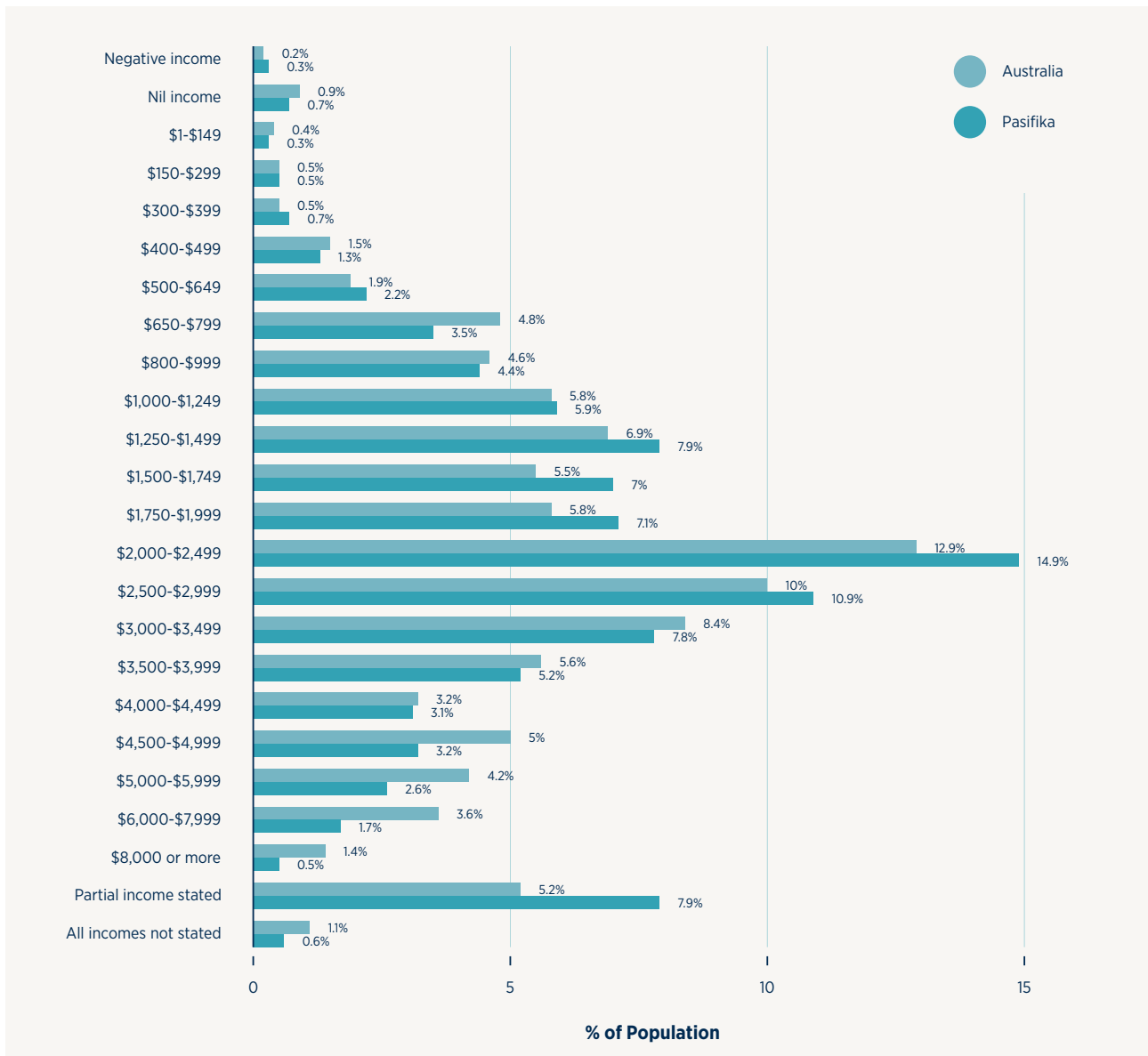
**WEEKLY FAMILY INCOME**



<sup>65</sup> Ravulo (2015).

<sup>66</sup> Ravulo (2015).

**FIGURE 4.19: (FINF) TOTAL FAMILY INCOME (WEEKLY), PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentages calculated from total applicable population.



Unemployment rates across seven variables for Pasifika couple families remain on par with the general Australian population, although marginally higher proportions of the Pasifika population are unemployed (Table 4.6).<sup>67</sup> The largest difference is observable with more Pasifika families with one parent working full-time and the other unemployed. This may reflect higher numbers of young dependent children per family and Pasifika families opting for at-home care because of the increasing cost of outsourcing child care. One Australian Government report calculated that in 2019 the average hourly cost of child care per child before assistance was approximately \$10, which could equate to \$100 per day per child.<sup>68</sup>



<sup>67</sup> Ravulo (2015). <sup>68</sup> Department of Education (2023).

**TABLE 4.6: (LFSF) LABOUR FORCE STATUS OF PARENTS/PARTNERS IN FAMILIES – UNEMPLOYMENT, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
Couple family: One employed full-time, other unemployed	287,039	1.5	8,322	2.3
Couple family: One employed part-time, other unemployed	117,778	0.6	3,006	0.8
Couple family: One away from work, other unemployed	27,678	0.1	1,006	0.3
Couple family: Both unemployed	44,673	0.2	1,048	0.3
Couple family: One unemployed, other not in the labour force	137,443	0.7	4,022	1.1
Couple family: One unemployed, other labour force status not stated	11,496	0.1	563	0.2
One-parent family: Unemployed	118,437	0.6	4,401	1.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,616,343</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>360,873</b>	<b>100.0</b>

\*Percentages calculated from total applicable population.

Since 2011, unemployment rates for one-parent families in Pasifika communities have slightly decreased, while those employed full-time have slightly increased. Slightly higher percentages of one-parent families in the Pasifika population are employed either full-time or part-time. However, unemployment in one-parent families is double the rate in the Pasifika population (1.2%) than the average Australian population (0.6%).

**TABLE 4.7: (LFSF) LABOUR FORCE STATUS – ONE-PARENT FAMILIES, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
One-parent family: Employed, worked full-time	789,986	4.0	23,160	6.4
One-parent family: Employed, worked part-time	616,870	3.1	15,603	4.3
One-parent family: Employed, away from work	125,976	0.6	4,039	1.1
One-parent family: Unemployed	118,437	0.6	4,401	1.2
One-parent family: Not in the labour force	1,087,097	5.5	26,142	7.2
One-parent family: Labour force status not stated	34,911	0.2	604	0.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,616,343</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>360,873</b>	<b>100</b>

\*Percentages calculated from total applicable population.

## 4.5 Household

Household mobility indicators demonstrate that Pasifika communities are more likely to change addresses within a period of one year (Table 4.9) and five years (Table 4.8). These figures suggest that there are higher rates of unstable housing in the Pasifika population than in the general population. This may be due to differences in home ownership between the Pasifika population and the general Australian population. As seen in Table 4.22, three times the Australian general population own their home outright and approximately 8% more of the general population have mortgages.

These mobility figures are relatively consistent with the 2011 census data. However, the general population in 2011 were twice as likely to remain in the same house at the one-year indicator than the Pasifika population. This figure has slightly decreased with 11.7% of the general population having a different address one year ago compared with 15.5% of the Pasifika population (Table 4.9). This change may speak to a broader trend of housing precarity and unaffordability in Australia.

**TABLE 4.8: (MV5D) HOUSEHOLD FIVE YEAR MOBILITY INDICATOR, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
All residents in the household aged five years and over had a different address five years ago	9,403,058	36.9	209,071	50.4
Some residents aged five years and over had a different address five years ago	1,835,676	7.2	44,870	10.8
No residents aged five years and over had a different address five years ago	11,761,554	46.2	140,348	33.8
At least one resident did not state an address five years ago	567,484	2.2	10,661	2.6
Not applicable	1,916,875	7.5	10,079	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,484,656</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>415,033</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 4.9: (MV1D) HOUSEHOLD ONE YEAR MOBILITY INDICATOR, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
All residents in the household aged one year and over had a different address one year ago	2,992,834	11.7	64,429	15.5
Some residents in the household aged one year and over had a different address one year ago	1,570,225	6.2	44,661	10.8
No residents in the household aged one year and over had a different address one year ago	18,613,972	73.0	289,688	69.8
At least one resident did not state an address one year ago	390,742	1.5	6,176	1.5
Not applicable	1,916,875	7.5	10,079	2.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,484,656</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>415,033</b>	<b>100</b>

The Pasifika population is three times more likely to have a two family household, at 10.1%, than the general population, at 3.8%, and four times more likely to have a three or more family household (Table 4.10). These figures continue to support the trend of more communal living arrangements among Pasifika peoples compared with the general Australian population.<sup>69</sup>

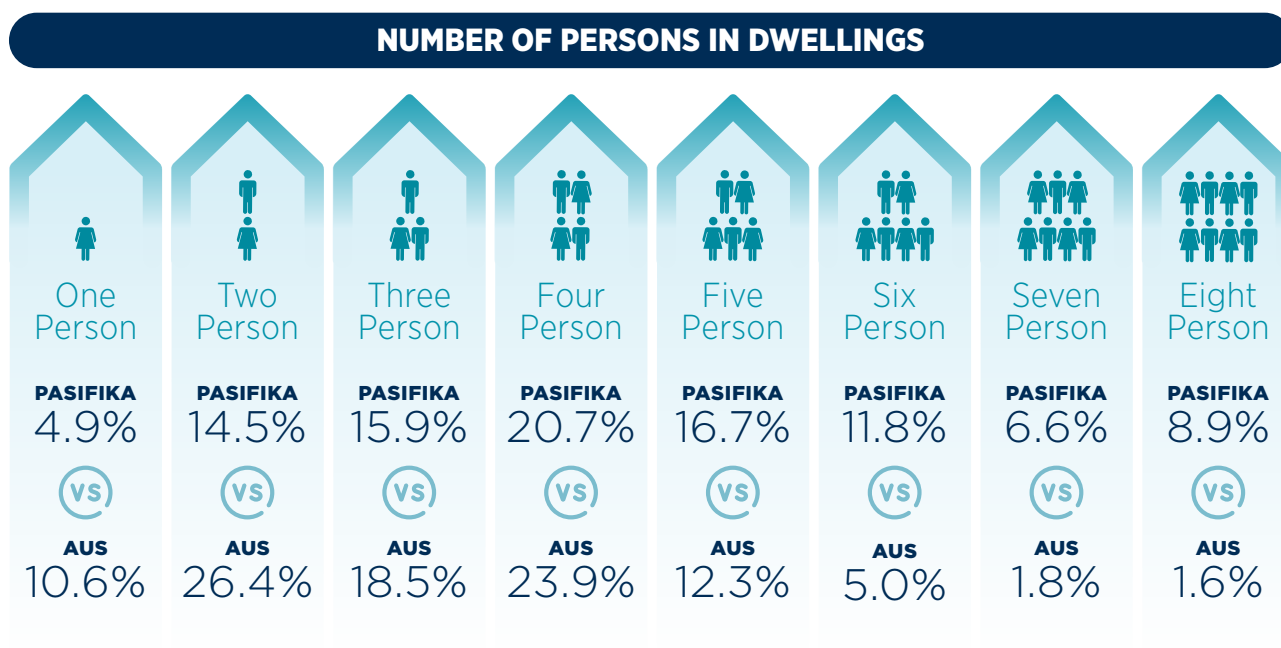
In terms of the number of persons usually resident in a dwelling, it is again evident that Pasifika families

consistently have larger household sizes, particularly when there are five or more individuals residing together. Notably, the Pasifika population is six times more likely to live in dwellings with eight or more persons (Figure 4.20). These trends are relatively consistent with 2011 findings.<sup>70</sup> In 2011, however, Pasifika population were eight times more likely to live in a dwelling with eight or more persons and in 2021 this figure reduced to six times more likely.

**TABLE 4.10: (HHCD) HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**

	AUSTRALIA	% AUSTRALIA	PASIFIKA	% PASIFIKA
One family household with only family members present	18,255,933	71.6	305,768	73.7
One family household with non-family members present	906,177	3.6	19,798	4.8
Two family household	954,753	3.8	41,751	10.1
Three or more family household	70,695	0.3	5,354	1.3
Lone person household	2,506,837	9.8	20,058	4.8
Group household	873,383	3.4	12,225	2.9
Other non-classifiable	891,913	3.5	2,094	0.5
Visitors only	282,736	1.1	310	0.1
Not applicable	742,231	2.9	76,78	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,484,656</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>415,033</b>	<b>100</b>

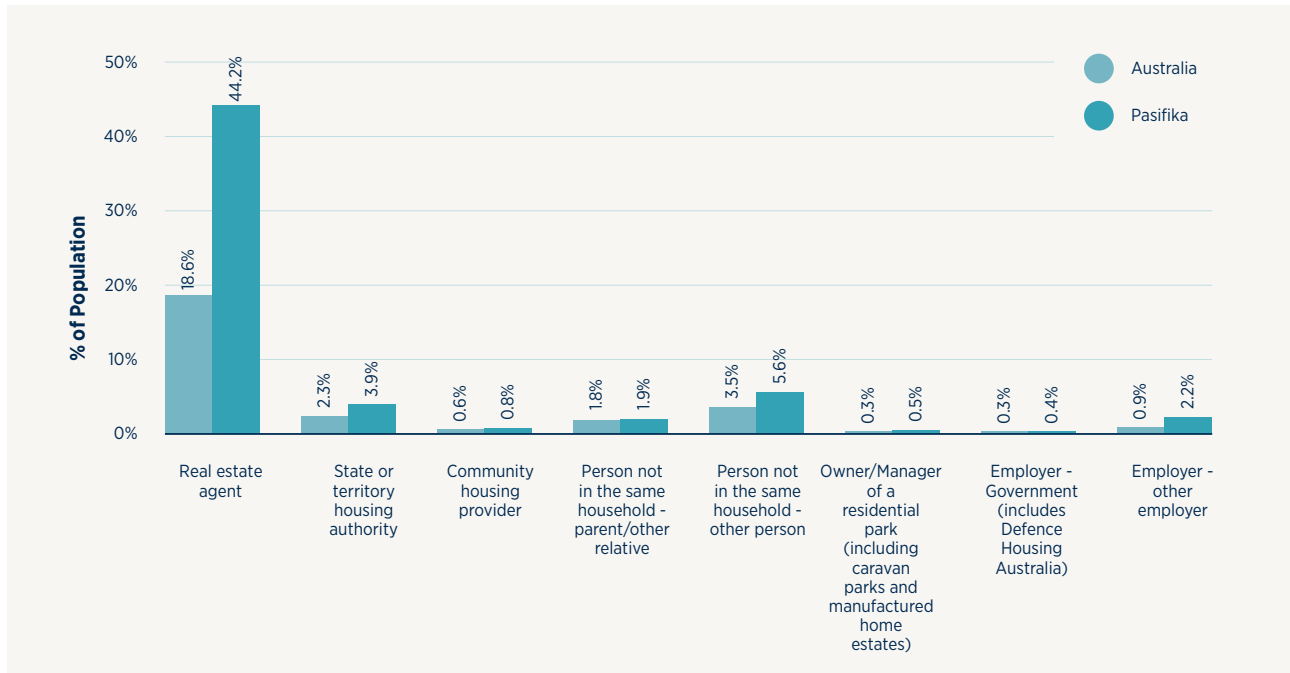
**FIGURE 4.20: (NPRD) NUMBER OF PERSONS USUALLY RESIDENT IN DWELLING, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



<sup>69</sup> Ravulo (2015). <sup>70</sup> Ravulo (2015).

The Pasifika population are more likely to rent than the general population (Figure 4.21 & 4.22) and less likely to own a house, which may shape higher household mobility rates among Pasifika communities

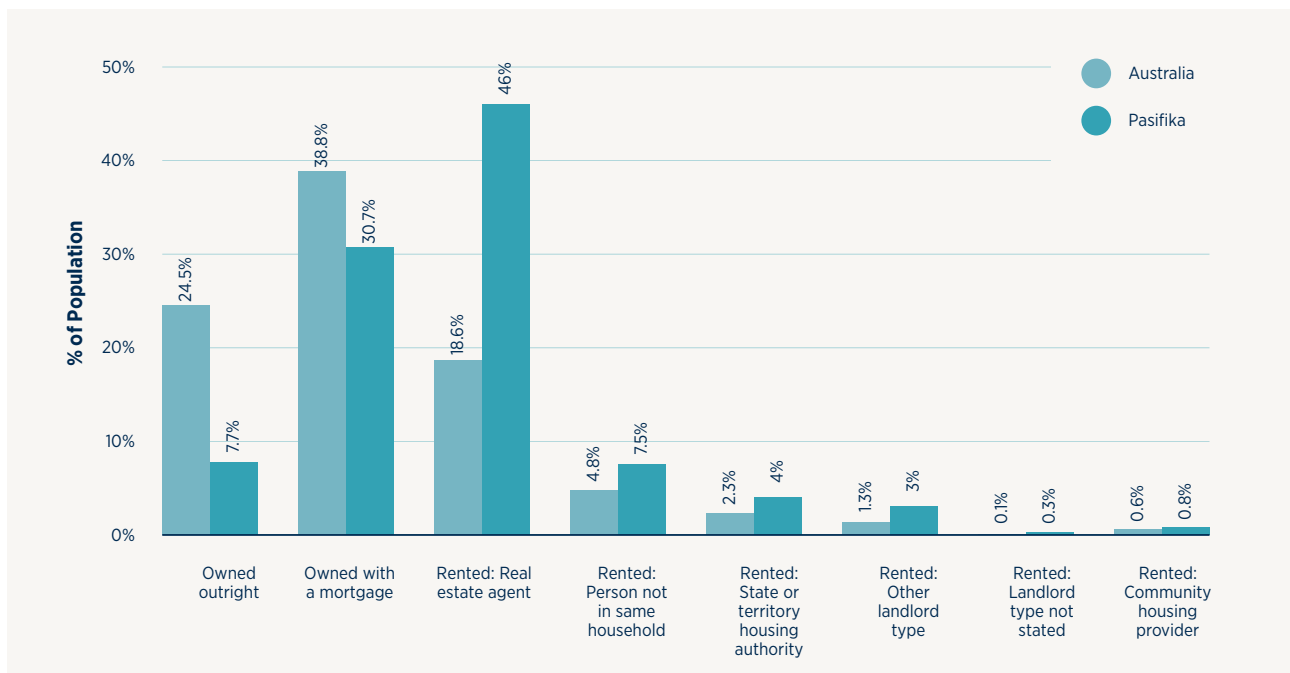
**FIGURE 4.21: (LLDD) LANDLORD TYPE, PASIFIKA AND AUSTRALIAN POPULATIONS, 2021**



\*Percentage calculated from total population for each cohort (Australia/Pasifika).

The supported accommodation flag is no longer classified in the census; however, Figure 4.21 indicates that 1.3% more of Pasifika peoples are living in public housing (state or territory housing authority) than the general population.

**FIGURE 4.22: (TENLLD) TENURE AND LANDLORD TYPE - MORTGAGE, 2021**



\*Percentages calculated with total Aus/Pac populations for each TENLLD category.

# 5. CASE STUDY:

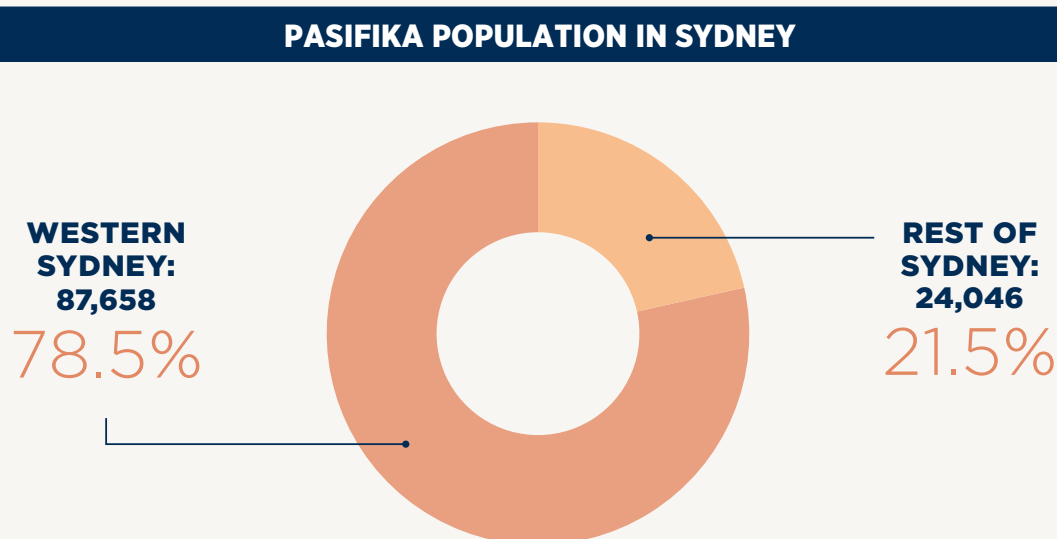
## PASIFIKA PEOPLES IN WESTERN SYDNEY

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Sydney accommodates approximately 25% of Australia's Pasifika population, with a significant concentration residing in Western Sydney, accounting for around 78.5% of the total Pasifika population in the city (Figure 5.1). However, a comparison of Western Sydney with the

remaining parts of Sydney reveals slight variations in the predominant ethnic groups. Pasifika peoples of Samoan ancestry are the most prevalent in Western Sydney, whereas Māori ancestry takes the lead in the rest of Sydney (Table 4.12).

FIGURE 5.1: PASIFIKA POPULATION IN SYDNEY, 2011 AND 2021





**TABLE 4.11: PASIFIKA POPULATION IN WESTERN SYDNEY (WS) AND REST OF SYDNEY (ROS), 2011-2021**

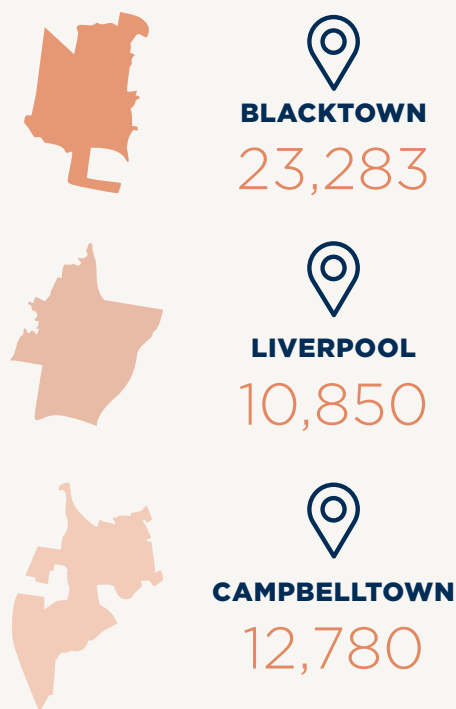
ANCESTRY	WS (2011)		WS (2021)		ROS (2011)		ROS (2021)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Cook Islander	3,282	6.2	5,492	6.3	781	4.6	1,160	4.8
Fijian	7,084	13.4	16,314	18.6	2,596	15.2	4,287	17.8
Hawaiian	44	0.1	105	0.1	21	0.1	62	0.3
I-Kiribati	27	0.1	78	0.1	23	0.1	43	0.2
Maori	12,692	23.9	16,716	19.1	7,393	43.2	9,257	38.5
Nauruan	8	0	19	0	0	0	4	0
New Caledonian	36	0.1	65	0.1	18	0.1	55	0.2
Niuean	618	1.2	1,158	1.3	277	1.6	454	1.9
Ni-Vanuatu	50	0.1	81	0.1	25	0.1	59	0.2
Papua New Guinean	527	1	668	0.8	477	2.8	695	2.9
Samoan	16,531	31.2	27,021	30.8	1,915	11.2	2,941	12.2
Solomon Islander	61	0.1	119	0.1	48	0.3	113	0.5
Tahitian	80	0.2	195	0.2	65	0.4	103	0.4
Tokelauan	611	1.2	937	1.1	40	0.2	43	0.2
Tongan	8,724	16.5	15,721	17.9	2,509	14.7	3,599	15
Tuvaluan	39	0.1	137	0.2	14	0.1	12	0
Melanesian and Papuan, nec	6	0	4	0	10	0.1	5	0
Melanesian and Papuan, nfd	19	0	44	0.1	16	0.1	60	0.2
Micronesian, nec	6	0	3	0	3	0	3	0
Micronesian, nfd	11	0	3	0	0	0	8	0
Oceanian, nfd	2,306	4.3	1,834	2.1	650	3.8	599	2.5
Polynesian, nec	37	0.1	144	0.2	45	0.3	72	0.3
Polynesian, nfd	228	0.4	800	0.9	187	1.1	412	1.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>53,027</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>87,658</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>17,113</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>24,046</b>	<b>100</b>

**TABLE 4.12: TOP 5 PASIFIKA COHORTS IN WESTERN SYDNEY (WS) AND REST OF SYDNEY (ROS), 2021**

ANCESTRY	WS	% OF WS	ROS	% OF ROS
Samoan	27,021	30.4	2,941	12.2
Māori	16,716	18.8	9,257	38.5
Fijian	16,314	18.4	4,287	17.9
Tongan	15,721	17.7	3,599	15.0
Cook Islander	5,492	6.2	1,160	4.8

**TABLE 4.13: PASIFIKA POPULATIONS IN WESTERN SYDNEY LGAS, 2021**

**TOP 3 LARGEST PASIFIKA POPULATIONS IN WESTERN SYDNEY**



WESTERN SYDNEY LGAS	2021	2021
	#	%
Blacktown	23,283	26.6
Blue Mountains	595	0.7
Camden	3,278	3.7
Campbelltown	12,780	14.6
Canterbury-Bankstown	9,456	10.8
Cumberland	6,118	7
Fairfield	6,083	6.9
Hawkesbury	611	0.7
Liverpool	10,850	12.4
Parramatta	3,722	4.2
Penrith	8,711	9.9
The Hills Shire	1,687	1.9
Wollondilly	484	0.6
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87,658</b>	<b>100</b>

The analysis of educational attainment among the Pasifika population in Sydney reveals interesting variations between the rest of Sydney and Western Sydney. When it comes to completing Year 12 or its equivalent, higher percentages of Pasifika individuals in the rest of Sydney (65.8%) successfully achieve this educational milestone, compared with 60.5% in Western Sydney, where a larger proportion of the Pasifika population completes education after Years 10 and 11 (Table 48).

Furthermore, the disparity in educational achievements extends to non-school qualifications. In the rest of Sydney, a greater proportion of Pasifika individuals hold bachelor's or postgraduate degrees, demonstrating a higher level of educational attainment within this segment of the community. Conversely, in Western Sydney, the rates of Pasifika individuals with certificate-level qualifications are notably higher than their counterparts in the rest of Sydney (Figure 5.3). These findings suggest that while educational attainment among Pasifika communities in both areas is notable, there are distinct differences in the types of qualifications obtained. These

trends demonstrate the increased importance Pasifika communities place on high school completion across both geographies. However, despite increased opportunities to pursue higher education, participation in university study remains lower among Pasifika peoples in Western Sydney, indicating that place-based barriers to university education uptake are in need of further investigation.

These variations in educational achievement have tangible implications for employment outcomes within the Pasifika population. The industry of employment breakdown, as shown in Figure 5.5, reflects the influence of educational disparities on career paths and opportunities. The rest of Sydney, with its higher rates of Pasifika individuals holding bachelor's or postgraduate degrees, is more likely to have their community members employed in industries that require higher levels of education and expertise. Conversely, in Western Sydney, where a greater proportion of Pasifika individuals possess certificate-level qualifications, the employment landscape may be characterised by industries that prioritise skills obtained through vocational training.

## PASIFIKA PEOPLES WHO HOLD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR ABOVE

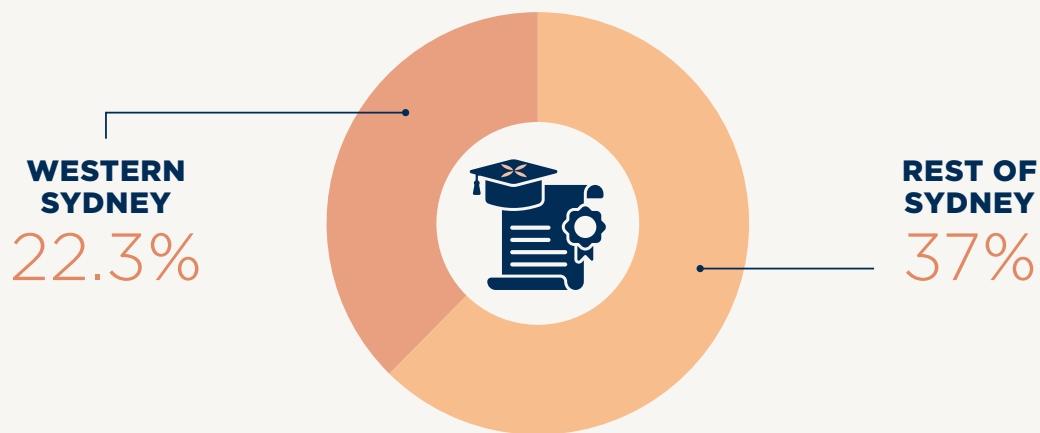


FIGURE 5.2: (HSCP) HIGHEST YEAR OF SCHOOL COMPLETED BY PASIFIKA POPULATION, WESTERN SYDNEY VS. REST OF SYDNEY, 2021

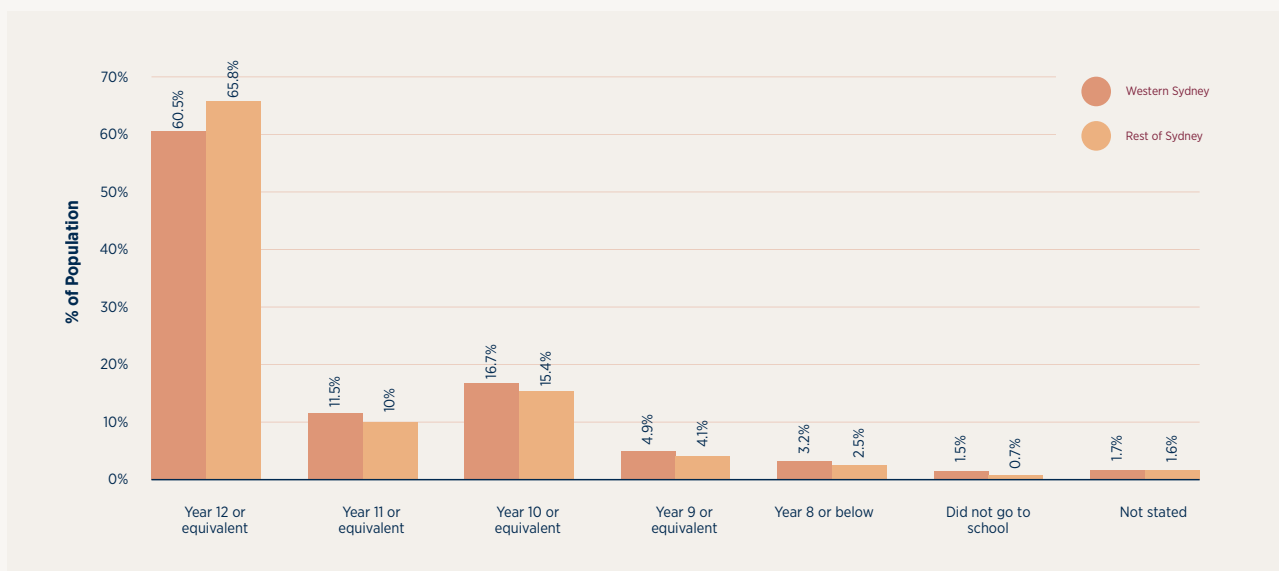
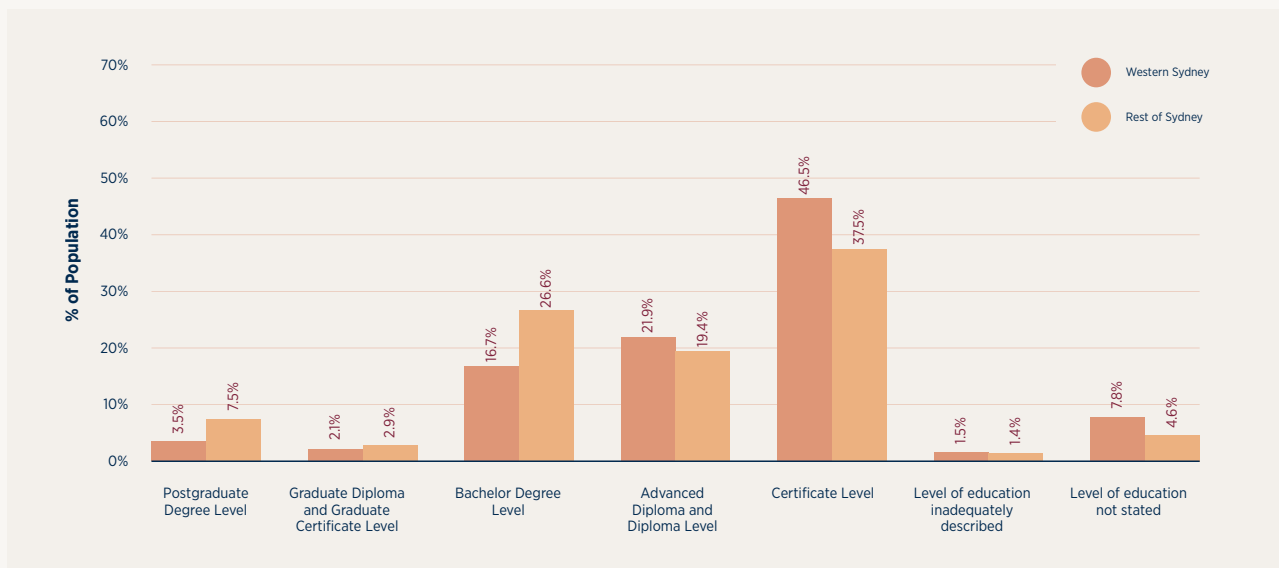


FIGURE 5.3: (QALLP) NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION: LEVEL OF EDUCATION BY PASIFIKA POPULATION, WESTERN SYDNEY VS. REST OF SYDNEY, 2021

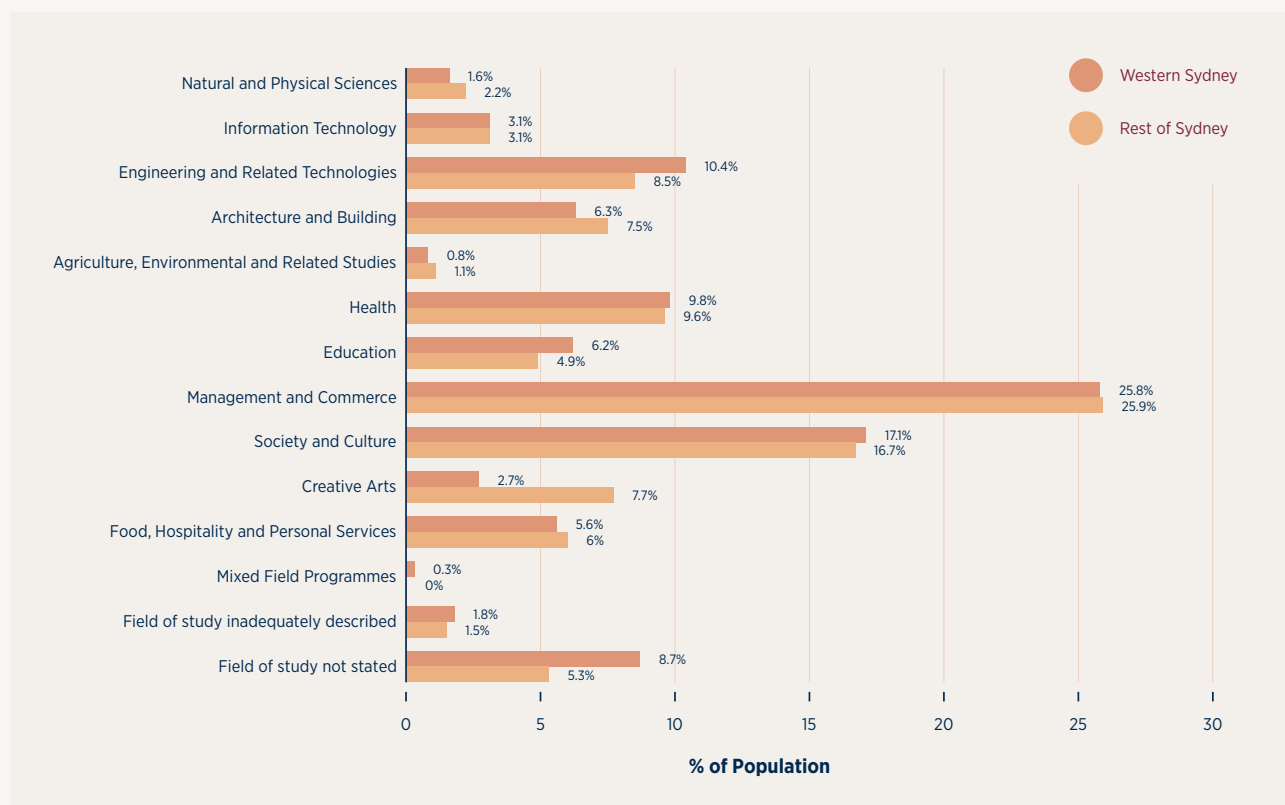


The field of study for non-school qualifications displays some similarities between Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney, with a notable exception in the realm of creative arts. The Pasifika population residing in Sydney's LGAs outside of Western Sydney exhibits a significant difference because more than double the percentage (7.7%) of individuals in this region hold qualifications in the creative arts compared with Western Sydney residents (2.7%) (Figure 5.4). Conversely, qualifications in management and commerce, as well as society and

culture, have the highest rates of attainment for both Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney.

These findings may suggest a shift in the value placed by Pasifika communities on completing high school education, as well as increased opportunities for Pasifika individuals to pursue higher education. However, despite these expanded possibilities, participation in university study among Pasifika peoples remains lower (Table 5.3), demonstrating potential barriers that hinder the uptake of university education within the Pasifika community.

**FIGURE 5.4: (QALFP) NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION: FIELD OF STUDY BY PASIFIKA POPULATION, WESTERN SYDNEY VS. REST SYDNEY, 2021**

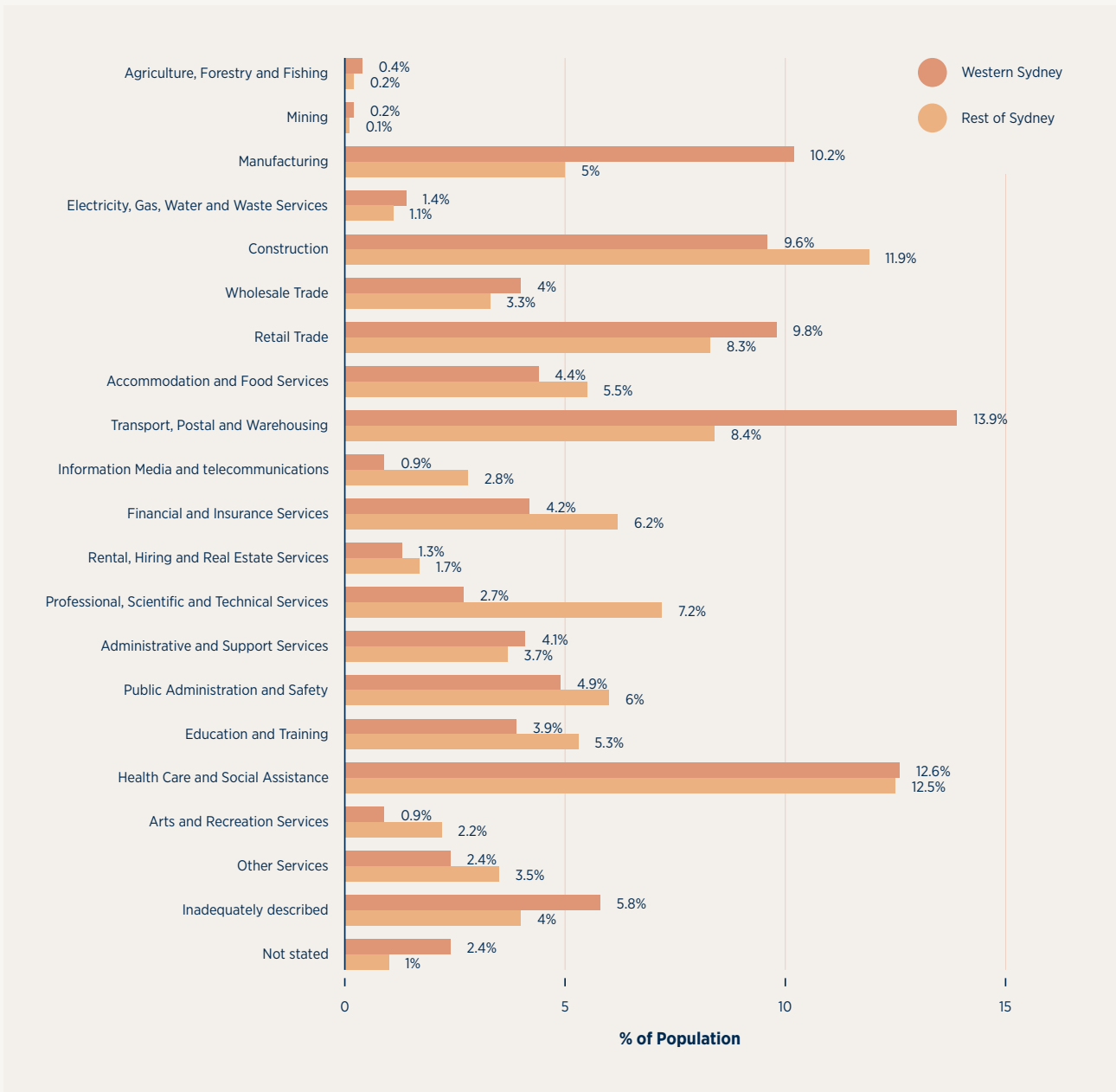


Spatial variations can also be observed in the industry of employment between the Pasifika population in Western Sydney and those residing in the rest of Sydney (Figure 5.5). In Western Sydney, a greater proportion of individuals are employed in the manufacturing sector, as well as in transport, postal and warehousing industries. In contrast, Pasifika communities residing across the rest of Sydney are more likely to be employed in professional, scientific and technical services, as well as in arts and recreation services. Approximately equal proportions of the population in Western Sydney and that of the rest of Sydney are employed in health care and social assistance.

These spatial variations in employment affect the median personal weekly income for Pasifika peoples across Sydney. The median personal weekly income for Pasifika peoples residing in Western Sydney is approximately \$800-\$999 per week. This is slightly lower than for those in the rest of Sydney, which is approximately \$1,000-\$1,249 (Figure 5.6).

These findings emphasise not only the distinct occupational preferences and distribution of Pasifika communities across different industries in the two regions of Sydney, but also the impact of both education levels and availability of local employment opportunities on industries of employment as well as socio-economic outcomes of the Pasifika population.

**FIGURE 5.5: (INDP) INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT BY PASIFIKA POPULATION, WESTERN SYDNEY VS. REST OF SYDNEY, 2021**



**MEDIAN WEEKLY INCOME FOR PASIFIKA PEOPLES**

**WESTERN SYDNEY**  
\$800-999  
per week

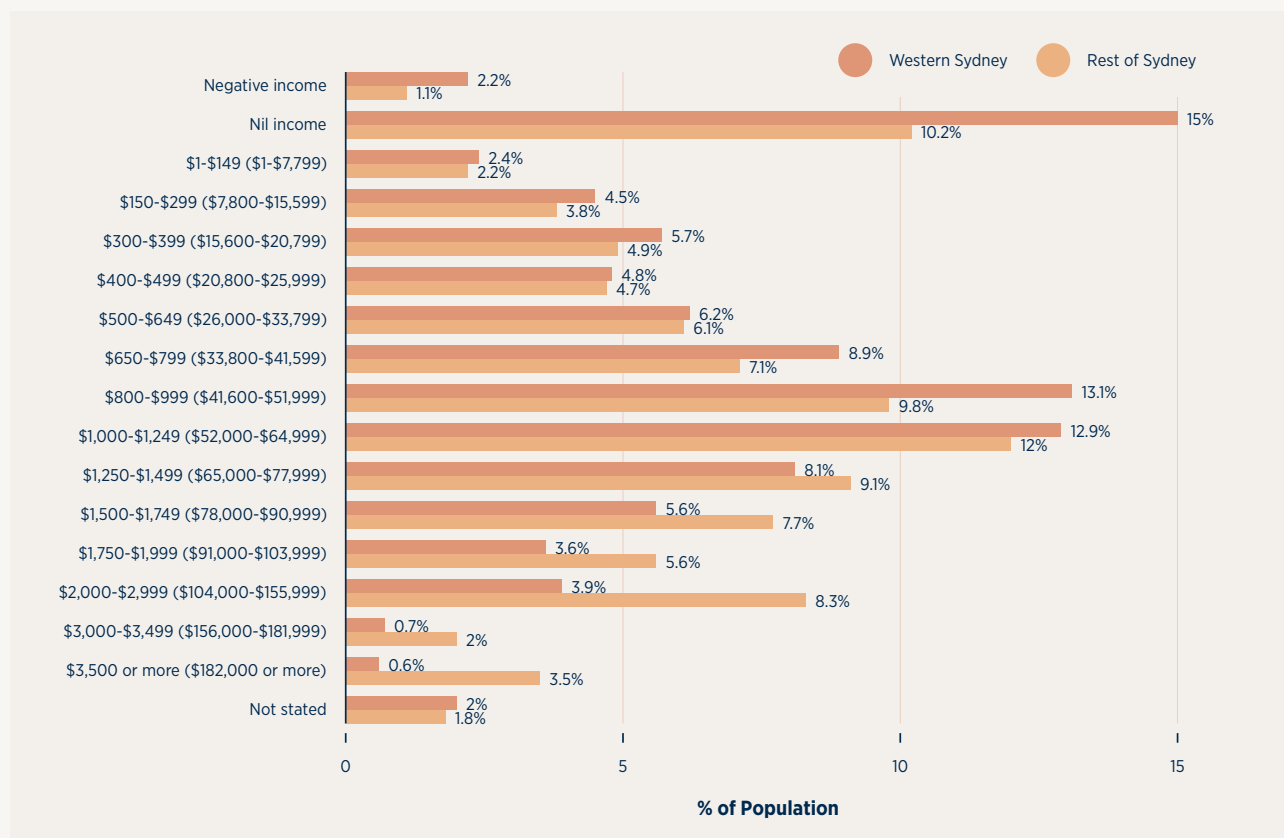


**REST OF SYDNEY**  
\$1,000-  
\$1,249  
per week



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**FIGURE 5.6: (INCP) TOTAL PERSONAL INCOME (WEEKLY), PASIFIKA POPULATION, WESTERN SYDNEY VS. REST OF SYDNEY, 2021**



By examining specific geographic regions, such as Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney, researchers, community practitioners and policymakers gain valuable insights into the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Pasifika communities in different locations.

For instance, the higher concentration of Pasifika individuals in the manufacturing and transport sectors in Western Sydney suggests the importance of targeted programs that promote skills

development and job opportunities in these industries, as well as the need to enhance access to education and training in professional, scientific and technical services and arts and recreation fields, in which Pasifika communities are underrepresented in the Western Sydney region. These spatial variations in education attainment, industry of employment and median personal weekly income between the Pasifika population in Western Sydney and the rest of Sydney underscore the importance of place-based responses and solutions to empower Pasifika communities across Australia.

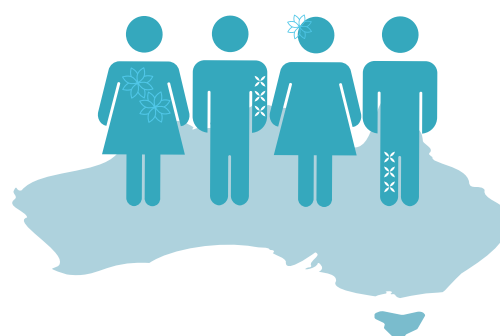
# 6. CONCLUSION

Photography by Sally Tsoutas

## POPULATION

In conclusion, the Pasifika population in Australia, making up 1.6% of the country's total population, showcases unique demographic characteristics and trends. Pasifika communities are distinctly youthful, with a notable proportion of individuals aged 0–29 years, suggesting a slightly older demographic shift from 2011. However, this younger profile contrasts with a lower life expectancy among Pasifika peoples compared with the broader Australian population.

The sociopolitical landscape has seen a positive shift, with an increase in Pasifika peoples attaining Australian citizenship since 2011, a trend that may continue following recent changes to citizenship eligibility for Pasifika peoples from New Zealand. However, those without Australian citizenship or permanent residency continue to face significant barriers, particularly in accessing government benefits and educational opportunities.



Family structures within the Pasifika community are also evolving, with an emerging trend towards smaller family sizes, as indicated by the proportion of families with a natural or adopted child under the age of 15. Despite these shifts, cultural traditions remain strong, as seen in the prevalence of multigenerational living arrangements in Pasifika households. Yet, a slight rise in lone-person households signals a transformation within the community.

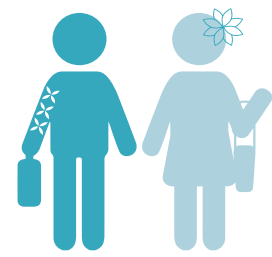
## EDUCATION



As evident in the 2021 census data, the education landscape for Pasifika communities in Australia is gradually evolving. There has been an increase in educational attainment at the secondary level, with Pasifika peoples demonstrating higher completion rates for Years 11 and 12 than previously observed. While fields such as management and commerce, society and culture, and engineering remain popular fields of study, there's still a noticeable lack of representation in the creative arts, which is an area in need of further support to encourage cultural connection within the Pasifika community.

Despite these advancements, Pasifika communities face significant challenges, particularly in pursuing higher education. Lower participation rates in university study, coupled with a preference for certificate-level education, signal the need for interventions that specifically address these persisting barriers to higher education.

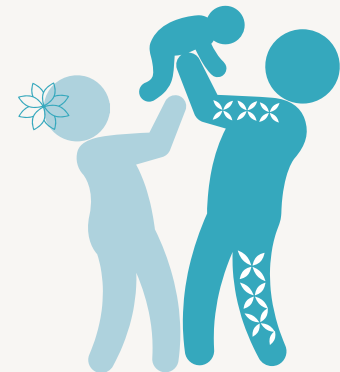
## EMPLOYMENT



As demonstrated in the 2021 census data, Pasifika communities in Australia continue to face challenges in employment equity, with lower incomes despite similar working hours compared with the general population, and a concentration in industries such as construction, manufacturing, and postal and warehousing. The feeling of undervaluation of cultural knowledge in particular settings could pose additional barriers in professional sectors such as education and training. The higher proportion of full-time employment and unemployment rates in Pasifika communities suggests an increased need for stable work. Yet, systemic issues such as transportation connectivity could further limit employment and education opportunities. These findings highlight the need for further research and targeted interventions to address these persistent socio-economic disparities, particularly the role of education across all learning stages.

## FAMILY

Pasifika communities in Australia are distinctively characterised by larger family structures, with a high number of children and communal sharing of childcare responsibilities. Despite a trend towards slightly smaller families over the decade between 2011 and 2021, Pasifika households remain four times more likely to consist of six or more members than the general Australian population. The shift towards smaller families may be influenced by several factors, including cultural shifts, financial pressures or broader declining fertility trends, all of which warrant further research.



Financially, Pasifika families demonstrate a robust capacity to match the average Australian family income, albeit often requiring multiple income earners within a household because of larger family sizes. Although unemployment rates are relatively on par with the wider Australian population, there are notable differences in employment distribution within Pasifika families, with a higher proportion having one parent working full-time and the other unemployed. This disparity may reflect a preference for in-home child care, possibly driven by rising childcare costs.

## HOUSEHOLD

The Pasifika communities in Australia experience distinct housing characteristics compared with the general population. They display higher rates of household mobility, suggesting potential housing instability, which could be tied to a larger reliance on rental accommodation and lower home ownership. Multi-family dwellings are more common in these communities, indicating a cultural preference for communal living arrangements. These households typically have a larger number of residents, particularly in cases where eight or more individuals reside together. Despite having more members in a household, vehicle ownership is less prevalent, underscoring the need for accessible public transport to ensure access to educational and employment opportunities. These findings provide valuable insights into the specific housing needs and transportation requirements of Pasifika communities in Australia.





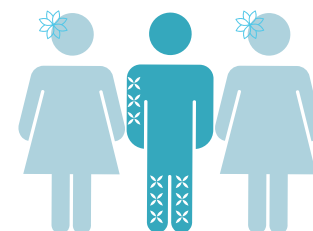
# CASE STUDY: PASIFIKA POPULATION IN SYDNEY



The Pasifika population in Sydney exhibits a diverse and complex landscape of educational attainment, employment sectors and socio-economic outcomes. The data highlights that Pasifika communities, while sharing common cultural roots, experience varying opportunities and challenges depending on their geographic location.

While progress has been seen in educational attainment, with a notable increase in Year 12 completion rates, university participation remains comparatively low, hinting at persistent barriers to higher education. The variations in employment sectors also reflect the diverse skill sets and occupational preferences within the Pasifika population, influenced by their respective educational qualifications.

Disparities in educational attainment, subsequent industry of employment and personal weekly income between Pasifika communities in Western Sydney and those in the rest of Sydney illuminate the multifaceted impact of education levels and local employment opportunities on socio-economic outcomes.



APEN promotes the use of this report as a foundational text to continue research and publish findings for other Australian States.



APEN recognises the diversity of work being undertaken by a number of organisations and community groups across Australia to promote and support Pasifika success at all levels of education.

APEN is gathering and compiling a national database of Pasifika education service providers.

For more information, visit us at [Pasifikaeducators.com.au](http://Pasifikaeducators.com.au)



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