ICCDPP
THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC POLICY

CATE
Ngā Kaitohutohu Rapuara Aotearoa
Careers and Transition Education Association NZ

Tertiary Education Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Country Report

10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy, Auckland, New Zealand, November 2026

Country name

Aotearoa New Zealand

This country report has been prepared for discussion and information purposes in connection with the 10th International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy. It draws on an online questionnaire on the Symposium themes, which national teams were invited to complete in advance.

ICCDPP: Navigating new horizons - Country perspectives survey

Introduction

Q1. Do you agree to participate in this survey?

Yes

Q2. I confirm that I am providing a response on behalf of my country.

Yes

Q3. I confirm that I am happy for the responses to this survey to be shared publicly.

Yes

Q4. Is your country going to participate in the 2026 ICCDPP symposium in New Zealand?

Yes

Q5. Who have you consulted with before completing this survey?

Sela Finau – MOE General Manager Learner Support and Tiriti Policy
Mary Tiumalu – MOE Senior Policy Manager, Pacific Policy
Joanah Ngan-Woo – MOE Senior Policy Analyst, Pacific Policy
Losi Su'a – MOE Principal Advisor Pacific Outcomes
Bernadetta Scanlon – MPP Deputy Secretary, Policy and Insights
Ruby Knight - Ministry of Pacific Peoples
Sereana Naepi – Associate Professor University of AKL
Ta'i Richard - General Manager, CIDANZ
Sili-Mireta Ropati - Assistant Pro Vice Chancellor Pacific

About you

Q6. What is your name?

Joanah Ngan-Woo

Q7. What organisation do you work for?

Ministry of Education

Q8. What is your job title?

Senior Policy Analyst

Q9. What is your email address?

joanah.ngan-woo@education.govt.nz

Q10. Are you happy for your contact details to be published on the ICCDPP website/ relevant documents as part of the publication of this data?

Yes

About your country

Q11. What is the name of your country?

New Zealand (Pasifika rep)

Q12. Which groups can access career development services in your country?

	Accessible and free to everyone	Accessible and free to some groups	Accessible to those who can pay	Not accessible
Indigenous people		X		
Young people in schools		X		
Young people in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)		X		
Young people in university or higher education		X		
Young people not in education or work (e.g. NEETs)		X		
Adults in education		X		
Adults in work		X		
Adults not in education or work (e.g. unemployed workers and the economic inactive)		X		
Migrants		X		
People in the criminal justice system		X		
Employers/businesses		X		

Q13. Are there any other groups in your country, not listed in Question 12 above, that can access career development services?

Some MoE programmes respond to the needs of Pacific learners from Year 7 to Year 13.

About your country

Q14. How far do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The career development policies,				X	

Q14. How far do you agree with the following statements?

programmes and services in my country are meeting the career needs of the population.					
School leavers in my country are well prepared for successful transitions to work or further learning.					X
There is a strong evidence base to support the provision of career development services in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on the education system in my country.		X			
AI is having a major impact on labour market in my country.			X		
AI is having a major impact on the provision of career development services in my country.			X		

Q15. Are indigenous groups involved in the design of career development services in your country?

Yes, to some extent

About your country

Q16. Please provide a short summary of your country's career development system. [Up to 300 words]

Pacific peoples are a priority group within the career development system, with targeted strategies to improve access and outcomes. The Pacific Employment Action Plan (2022) emphasises stronger engagement and partnership with Pacific communities to design employment, education, and training services that reflect their aspirations and cultural values. Government funding also supports community-led, Pacific-focused programmes that build skills. There are ongoing efforts to strengthen culturally responsive design and reduce systemic barriers and how political shifts, shift priorities. Sometimes we are heavily invested in creating a STEM workforce for Pacific other times we are more inclusive. Sometimes we have the political tools to address inequities and sometimes that is not a priority.
The Talanoa Ako longitudinal evaluation was completed between 2006 and 2019 captured the voices and perspectives of Pacific learners, parents, families, and community leaders across Aotearoa New Zealand. Over 18,000 in-depth Talanoa were collected, collated, and analysed, providing a strong evidence base `for the development and delivery model, and evaluation approach of a career-pathways focused programme for Pacific learners. In response to these insights, Matamoana was activated to co-designed with a group of experts in the field. The programme focuses on strengthening the awareness and confidence of Pacific learners and their families in understanding career pathways in Aotearoa, enabling them to make more informed decisions about their futures beyond school. Feedback from parents highlighted a desire for more accessible and relevant information about career pathways, particularly in STEM fields. There was a clear need for opportunities to engage directly with employers, tertiary providers, and industry representatives to better understand available options and how to support their children in navigating an increasingly complex career landscape.

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

National Careers System Strategy | Tertiary Education Commission • Careers Quality Framework | Tertiary Education Commission • Career Navigator Pacific-specific research • Redesigning the Vocational Education and Training system to unlock the potential of Pacific Peoples through workforce development: Strategies to inform vocational training design
The Saili Malo Evaluation Report for 2024-2025 will be available in August 2026. Article -

Q17. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide insights into your country's career development policies and systems. [Up to 300 words]

https://mailchi.mp/education/matavai-24-april-2026-17449083
Website of the Saili Malo resources - https://newzealandcurriculum.tahurangi.education.govt.nz/talanoa-ako-suite-of-programmes/5637167086.p?activeTab=tab:3

OECD data shows New Zealand students are feeling unprepared to transition to work and training. New Zealand will thrive when it harnesses career support as a powerful intervention to align the skills, talents and capabilities of its students with anticipated future job market demands. A UK study on the investment of career guidance found effective career support helps students align skills with employer demand, engage and be more productive in the workplace to support a well-functioning economy with a decline in not in employment, education or training (NEET) rates. (UK research identified 10 estimates of the return on investment (ROI) for career guidance in schools and almost all had a positive ROI). Saili Malo utilises Matamoana: An as and by Pacific theory and approach, which reflects a Pacific-centric way of thinking, being, and working. Matamoana was developed in response to the Talanoa Ako longitudinal evaluations (2006–2019), which captured the voices and experiences of Pacific learners, parents, communities, and educators. It embodies the Ākonga Pacific Outcomes approach, guiding how the education system engages with Pacific communities and strengthens its cultural capability within the Aotearoa context. At its core, Matamoana emphasises the importance of relationships (vā) and recognises Pacific funds of knowledge as essential to effective and meaningful education responses. It centres appreciatively inquiry, constructivism and evaluation that is grounded practice as key drivers of engagement and success. Matamoana informs the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of Saili Malo and other programmes, ensuring they are responsive, strengths-based, and grounded in Pacific worldviews.

Q18. Do you have any other comments that you would like to make about the way in which your country organises its career development services? [Up to 300 words]

There is limited research on Pacific-specific experiences of the careers system, but what exists suggests that supports need to recognise the influence of family and collective decision-making. An individual makes decisions within the context of their family's aspirations and needs. The system at present does not do this well. • TEC research found five key barriers limiting opportunities for Pacific and other priority learners: cost of study, lack of connections with desired pathways, limited capacity to engage with career decision-making, COVID-19 impacts, and systemic biases including streaming practices in schools. • Pacific young people remain overrepresented in NEET rates and unemployment – an outcome of inequitable support for career development and progression. • MBIE's 2025 Employment Monitor found 89% of Pacific workers were satisfied with their employment situation, but 60% had at least one employment concern compared with 49% of all workers, and 82% felt easily replaceable compared with 69% of all workers. • Pacific-specific services seem to work best when they are community-based and practice, offering support that is relational and collective. OECD data shows students who receive early, inclusive and well-supported career guidance are more likely to be employed, earn more and feel satisfied in their careers.
Saili Malo utilises Matamoana: An as and by Pacific theory and approach, which reflects a Pacific-centric way of thinking, being, and working. Matamoana was developed in response to the Talanoa Ako longitudinal evaluations (2006–2019), which captured the voices and experiences of Pacific learners, parents, communities, and educators. At its core, Matamoana emphasises the importance of relationships (vā) and recognises Pacific funds of knowledge as essential to effective and meaningful education responses. It centres appreciatively inquiry, constructivism and evaluation that is grounded practice as key drivers of engagement and success. Matamoana informs the design, development, delivery, and evaluation of Saili Malo and other programmes, ensuring they are responsive, strengths-based, and grounded in Pacific worldviews.

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q19. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q19. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	disagree	
Career development services contribute to economic growth.		X
Career development services contribute to workforce productivity.		X
Career development services deliver a positive return on investment on public spending.		X
Career development services support entrepreneurialism.		X
Career development services help to address employers' skills and labour needs.		X
Career development services can be accessed by small and medium sized businesses (SMEs).	X	
Career development services improve levels of job satisfaction.	X	
Career development services contribute to decent work (jobs with access to training, a living wage and other benefits).	X	
Career development services support equality of access to learning and work opportunities.		X
Career development services contribute to the green transition.	X	

Productivity and the inclusive economy

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) data shows the majority of New Zealand students are planning to pursue a limited number of traditional, high-status roles that will only make up a small part of the job market. This is leading to a mismatch between the careers young people aspire to and the reality of the labour market
Statement Evidence
Career development services support entrepreneurialism. More geared to education, training, employment and transitions. Pacific-specific initiatives (like PEAP) are more explicit about supporting self-employment and business ownership.
Career development services help to address employers' skills and labour needs. Policy is in place to attempt to improve this, but delivery is not aligned with this. Employers still signalling that education is not yet preparing people with skills businesses need. There are persistent and widespread skill shortages, with the EMA skills shortage survey 2023 finding 71% of employers said they couldn't find highly skilled people (up from 40% in 2022). While Pacific learners tend to enrol in high demand areas like nursing, teaching, construction, and human welfare there is still concern about under-representation in STEM and high-growth technical fields. And even in high demand areas like health where Pacific learners' enrolments have increased (from 13.5% to 19.5% of all Pacific undergrad enrolments between 2010 and 2020), attrition rates remain an issue.
Drawing from the Business Operations Survey, the Productivity Commission highlight that the balance of firms rating the skilled labour market as being good, compared to those who report it as being bad, has generally been declining over the last ten years (NZPC, 2024). Even though the coverage of qualifications

Q20. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support productivity. [Up to 300 words]

has expanded, it is possible that the underlying quality of education has declined. Please note, the survey did not provide a Pacific specific lens.

Career development services can be accessed by small and medium sized businesses (SMEs). Unsure – limited evidence to show that SMEs systematically use career development services or that services are tailored to Pacific-owned SMEs or supporting Pacific employees.

Q21. Provide further information about the way in which policies and practices for career development services in your country support an inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

Overall, New Zealand's current policy settings strongly recognise the role of careers services in productivity through better skills matching, better transitions between learning and work, and lifelong skill development. The National Careers System Strategy, Tahatū Career Navigator, the Tertiary Education Strategy, vocational education reforms, Connected and MSD career guidance services all point in this direction.
For the inclusive economy, the policy intent is also strong: equitable access is a core careers-system objective, and Pacific-specific initiatives such as the Pacific Employment Action Plan, Tupu Aotearoa and Toloa recognise that Pacific peoples need targeted, culturally responsive supports. However, the Pacific experience differs from the average. Pacific workers report high employment satisfaction but also greater vulnerability, pay and hours concerns, and lower self-rated knowledge of employment rights than the average worker. The Pacific Pay Gap inquiry also points to structural discrimination, lower earnings and calls for decent work/living wage outcomes. Pacific students need more support at critical points in career planning as they report receiving advice but not choosing subjects based on that advice, not knowing if they are taking the right subjects for their post-school pathway and not knowing what their school offers for developing vocational pathways.
TEC, 'Transitions from Secondary School - Research Report' (August 2022), Transitions from Secondarv School Tertiarv Education Commission: data shows 55% of New Zealand school leavers are projected to make up only 26% of the workforce by 2028.

Q22. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the relationship in your country between policies for career development, and policies for productivity and the inclusive economy. [Up to 300 words]

• Voices-of-Pacific-Peoples-Pacific-Pay-Gap-Inquiry-Report.pdf
• Pacific-Adolescent-Career-Pathways-Final-Report.pdf
• Employment Monitor report 2025
• Workers in New Zealand - Snapshot 2025

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q23. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services support people to develop skills		X			
Career development services support people to access training		X			
Career development services support the uptake of TVET pathways		X			

Q23. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

Career development services support lifelong learning	X

Q24. What are the biggest challenges for participation in the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system in your country? [Please tick all that apply.]

School leavers do not see TVET pathways as attractive
Parents do not see TVET pathways as attractive for their children
The practice of compulsory assignment of students with academic challenges to TVET programmes
School staff do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
Career development practitioners do not know enough about TVET pathways and the occupations they lead to
TVET options do not provide opportunities for educational progression e.g. to higher education
High rates of drop-out from TVET
Lack of career development services for learners considering TVET
Lack of ongoing career development support for learners studying TVET pathways
The influence of gender stereotyping on TVET choices
Falling numbers of adult learners
Shortage of employers offering training placements
Poor alignment between TVET provision and employers' needs

Enhancing skills and developing technical and vocational education and training (TVET)

Q25. At what age do young people generally move onto a TVET pathway if that is the path they take?

Clear gaps remain in the coverage of industry sectors and an opportunity to do more targeted activities with employers in future growth areas to avoid projected skill shortages and bolster the economy. New Zealand is reportedly below the OECD average in effective career-related activities for students (e.g. job shadowing). Broader and deeper engagement with employers can help students make good decisions and clear career plans.
Year 11 to 12 through pathways courses at secondary schools.

Q26. Does the age of pathway selection cause challenges for your TVET system?

Yes

Q27. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the age of pathway selection? [Up to 300 words]

For Pacific learners in VET, New Zealand has some strong design elements—especially fees-free pre-trades pathways, Māori and Pasifika Trades Training (MPTT), workplace-based “earn while you learn” models, learner-success frameworks, and examples of culturally grounded providers. But the overall system is still uneven: effective practice exists in pockets, while the end-to-end pathway from entry to completion, progression, improved work outcomes and intergenerational benefits is not yet consistent or supported. The design of the system appears to recognise the right outcomes, but implementation is variable and accountability for Pacific outcomes is weak. • Entry: Insufficient awareness of workplace-based learning opportunities, or lack of confidence to enter these pathways • Retention: high performing providers have systems for teaching, pastoral care, cultural identity and community connection but this is not always common practice • Completion: balancing family obligations, work and learning remains a challenge for completion.
Students are unsure and anxious about their career prospects and do not have the exposure to opportunities or complex decision-making abilities that lead to confident and market-aligned choices. OECD data shows New Zealand ranks as one of the lowest OECD members for students who feel well prepared for their future path after the final year of education.

Q27. Is there anything else that you would like to say about the age of pathway selection? [Up to 300 words]

In many cases, pathway decisions are influenced by schools, where TVET is often positioned as a less desirable option compared to academic routes.

Q28. Provide further information on the ways in which policies for career development services in your country enhance policies for skills development, TVET, and lifelong learning. [Up to 300 words]

Monitoring Gateway and Trades Academies 2025: • Gateway and trades academies support more Pacific students to remain in education at age 17 (comparing between 2014 and 2018) • Pacific students had similar education outcomes to all students but were less likely to enter apprenticeships. • Pacific women experienced weaker employment outcomes and low participation in apprenticeships. Neither programme (gateway or trades academies) significantly improved these. • Pacific peoples are concentrated is particular areas like building and construction. 16-Sept-2019-Annex-2-Draft-Evidence-Brief-003.pdf • Pacific people also experience inequitable education and employment compared to non-Pacific people. Although Pacific participation in vocational education is high, these learners tend to participate at lower levels of study and are less likely to be doing apprenticeships (or apprenticeship equivalent qualifications at Level 4 and above) than New Zealand Europeans. • 39 percent of Pacific learners engaged in vocational education in 2017 were studying at Level 3, compared to 35 percent of New Zealand European learners. 34 percent of Pacific learners in VET were doing apprenticeships or apprenticeship-equivalent qualifications in 2017 compared to 44 percent of New Zealand European learners.
Saili Malo adopts a long-term approach by supporting learners from Years 7–13, with a particular emphasis on early engagement. By introducing career awareness at the intermediate level, the programme ensures learners are better prepared to make informed subject and pathway decisions in their senior years. The Saili Malo programme has exceeded its objectives, demonstrating strong impact.

Q29. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights about how career development services can enhance skills and support TVET. [Up to 300 words]

Data shows, with hindsight, 75% of school leavers acknowledge they would have made a different career plan. 11o/o of school leavers who end up on NEET pathways receive the least careers advice and do not always know their areas of personal interest/ goals or understand how to make a complex decision, OECD data shows.

• Engaging with Pacific peoples: Project Lumana'i: Research findings show the need to develop effective digital tools and resources that Pacific young people can use alongside their parents, families and teachers to explore their interests and talents, discover the wide range of options available, raise career aspirations and make a career plan.
• Pacific-Adolescent-Career-Pathways-Final-Report.pdf
• Pacific Construction and Infrastructure Workforce Development Plan NZ

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q30. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to thrive.				X	
Vulnerable and disadvantaged groups can access career development services.				X	
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access decent				X	

Q30. To what extent do policies for education, training, and employment in your country reflect the following statements?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Career development services help vulnerable and disadvantaged groups to thrive.				X	
work.					
Career development services support vulnerable groups to access the education and training system.				X	
There is adequate funding for career development services targeting vulnerable and disadvantaged groups.				X	
Policies for social inclusion intersect with policies for education, training, and employment.				X	

Q31. Which disadvantaged and vulnerable groups does your government have policies to support and which are provided with bespoke or targeted career development services. [Tick all that apply]

	Government has policies to support	Provided with bespoke or targeted career development services
Indigenous people		X
Women and girls	X	
Men and boys	X	
Ethnic minorities	X	
Religious minorities	X	
Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people	X	
People from low-socio-economic backgrounds	X	
People with low skill levels	X	
Migrants	X	
People with disabilities	X	
People with health and mental health challenges	X	
Younger people	X	
Older people	X	X
Other		

Ensuring disadvantaged and vulnerable groups can thrive

Q32. Can you provide any further information about the way in which policies for career development in your country support vulnerable and disadvantaged people? [Up to 300 words]

Policies:
• Delivering for Pacific communities: govt strategy for Pacific peoples. Includes priority areas including economic growth and education. It specifically identifies education as including boosting skills, employment, and investment in Pacific languages and cultures, and economic growth as lifting Pacific economic contribution and strengthening the Pacific business sector
• Pacific Employment Action Plan: sets out how Government will support Pacific communities' aspirations for employment, self-employment and business ownership. Its three strategic objectives are diversifying the Pacific workforce, nurturing the vā by addressing systemic barriers, and building Pacific entrepreneurship, with targeted employment and training initiatives such as Toloa STEAM, Tupu Aotearoa and Pacific Work Connect supported through Budget funding.
• New Zealand's Employment Strategy: guides government work across the employment, education and training system and aims to improve employment outcomes for all New Zealanders. It explicitly includes a set of population-specific employment action plans for groups experiencing poorer labour-market outcomes, including Pacific peoples.
• Youth Employment Action Plan: focuses on improving young people's transitions into employment, further education and training. It specifically notes that Māori, Pacific peoples, disabled people and young people with caring responsibilities have among the highest levels of unemployment and/or non-participation in education or training among 15–24-year-olds.
• Women's Employment Action Plan: supports women's employment pathways, with a particular focus on women marginalised in work, including Pacific women. It explicitly aims to improve access to training and employment programmes and provide opportunities for higher-skilled, higher-paid employment, particularly for wāhine Māori and Pacific women
• Action Plan for Pacific Education: key education system plan for Pacific learners and families, with a vision that Pacific learners and families are safe, valued and equipped to achieve their education aspirations. It specifically calls for education providers to partner with Pacific families so that aspirations for learning and employment can be met and includes tertiary providers within its system-change focus.

Q33. Please provide links to any key reports, articles or websites that provide further insights into the way that your country's career development system supports vulnerable and disadvantaged people. [Up to 300 words]

Career development policies in Aotearoa New Zealand aim to support vulnerable and disadvantaged groups by improving equitable access to information, guidance, and pathways into further education, training, and employment. Despite this intent, evidence from Pacific communities highlights ongoing barriers, including limited access to culturally relevant career information, low confidence in navigating complex systems, and reduced exposure to diverse career pathways.
Saili Malo responds directly to these challenges by providing a Pacific culturally grounded, family-centred approach to career development for Pacific learners. The programme supports learners from Years 7–13, with a strong emphasis on early engagement. By introducing career awareness before key decision points, Saili Malo strengthens learners' ability to make informed subject selections and pathway choices, helping to address inequities that often emerge later in schooling.
A key feature of Saili Malo is the intentional inclusion of parents and families and the integration of Pacific funds of knowledge and careers best practice. Saili Malo brings together what is out there and is delivered and offered to Pacific communities through Saili Malo.
Pacific communities have identified a need for greater support in understanding career pathways and how to guide their children. Through talanoa, dedicated workbooks, and opportunities to connect with employers and tertiary providers, the programme builds the knowledge, confidence, and capability of families to actively participate in career decision-making.
If we can help to improve career support in the next few years, students will be better at choosing the right pathways for them and vulnerable cohorts will not be disproportionately affected. OECD found that young people considering occupations where they may be poorly represented need to be able to see for themselves if workplaces will be welcoming and supportive.

Bespoke or targeted career development services • Māori and Pasifika Trades Training: provides fees-free pre-trades training for Māori and Pasifika learners aged 16–40 and supports progression into trades employment, further training and New Zealand Apprenticeships. • Scholarships: Toloa Scholarships and STEM initiatives (MPP), Tuli takes flight (MOE), Pacific Education Foundation scholarships, Pacific health scholarships (Health NZ), • Internships: Tupu tai, Tupu Toa, Game On • Tupu Aotearoa • Pacific Business Trust mentoring, coaching, workshops • Pacific Nursing pathway