



Pasifikology

The heart that supports, promotes and grows psychology for Pasifika.

*Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Kia orana, Nisa bula vinaka, Fakaalofa lahi atu,
Taloha ni and warm Pacific greetings.*

After a pause of a few years, I'm delighted to present this first issue of our revived Pasifikology newsletter to you all. Much has changed around us; our purpose has not. We are here to uplift Pacific knowledge, strengthen Pacific practice, and champion Pacific voices across Aotearoa and the wider Moana.

In that spirit, consider this issue a reconnection and a reset. We're re-establishing a regular rhythm of updates, resources, and opportunities that speak to the realities of our communities and the aspirations of our practitioners, researchers, and allies. The vaka is launched again and steadied by our values of service, respect, relationality, and collective care.

Where we're heading

Over the next year, Pasifikology will focus on three priorities:

1. Reconnecting the network – rebuilding our membership list, increasing student engagement, regional links, and communities of practice.
2. Sharing research and what works – in particular the role of AI in psychology and psychology's specific role in climate change,
3. Shaping systems – elevating Pacific evidence and lived experience in policy, commissioning, and workforce development.

In this issue

- State of the Network - a brief update and what's coming next
- Member Spotlight - acknowledging the Pasifikology Executive team
- Resources - update on latest research
- Dates & Opportunities - talanoa/webinars

Your voice matters

This newsletter is for you and stronger with you. Please:

- Send us your wins, lessons, and questions from practice and research.
- Nominate colleagues for future spotlight.
- Put your hand up to host a regional talanoa or webinar.
- Share topics you want us to cover and the tools you need.

Thank you for the countless ways you serve our families and communities every day. As we relaunch, my commitment as Chair is simple: Pasifikology will be useful, connected, and courageous. This will be a place where Pacific knowledge is honoured, where we learn from each other, and where our collective voice shapes better outcomes.

Malo 'aupito

Denise Kingi-'Ulu'ave

Chair, Pasifikology

Introduction to Executive



Denise Kingi-'Ulu'ave

Chair, Pasifikology



Dr Elizabeth Mati

Executive Member,
Pasifikology



Dr Max Maiava

Executive Member,
Pasifikology



Dr Sam Manuela

Executive Member,
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Dr Mele Taumoepeau

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Luisa Tuaoimaalii
Student Representative,
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Bale Kito
Student Representative,
Pasifikology

Visit pasifikology.co.nz to find out more.

Registered Psychology Space

Psychology Assistant role

Following their consultation process, the New Zealand Psychologists Board has arrived at the decision to proceed with establishing the Psychology Assistant role and scope of practice. The full scope of practice can be found [here](#), and includes details on roles, tasks and responsibilities in and out of scope, and qualification and registration requirements. The training programme for this role will be developed by AUT and the University of Canterbury and will include public consultation on the prescribed qualification. The aim is to have the qualification developed in time for training to commence in 2026.

Student Space



Jordan is undertaking a PhD and a Postgraduate Diploma in Clinical Psychology at the University of Otago

As a Pasifika Psychology Student, what challenges did you face in balancing cultural identity with academic expectations and how did you navigate those challenges/spaces?

This was something I had not considered before my entry into postgraduate psychology, and I found it quite difficult. When it comes to navigating relational space, I have always been quite an informal person. I use casual language, laugh frequently and loudly, and view self-disclosure and connection as the foundation of forging strong relationships. Therefore, trying to assume the formal role of a clinical psychologist was quite a difficult transition for me. I found myself being too formal and on other occasions not being formal enough. Looking back on it, I was trying to put forward a fake impression of what I thought a clinical psychologist should be and was losing my true self in the process. Fortunately for me, I was surrounded by a lot of great people, including the Pacific staff at the University of Otago and Pacific Trust

What influenced your decision to pursue psychology and what key steps did you take in your academic journey to get where you are now?

I always wanted to be in a role where I would be of service to my community. I began my university study seeking a career in nursing but became really interested in psychology after our mental health modules and recognised the need for more culturally competent mental healthcare. So, I jumped into an undergraduate psychology degree with no real idea of where it could take me. I had no understanding of research when I started. Although, I quickly developed a passion for it and the way research can be used to inform policy and make societal change. At the same time, I wanted to become a trained mental health professional so I could help others make meaningful improvements to their wellbeing. But I could not have done it without God, my family, and the guidance of others. Seeking support from Pasifika staff and community leaders helped me make the right decisions and gave me the confidence to apply for the programme!

Otago, who encouraged me to bring needed change to the discipline by incorporating Pasifika ways of being and relating into my practice. With their time and help, I realised there was no one right way to be a clinical psychologist and I could only truly connect with people, and therefore, truly help people if I was my authentic self.

What message of encouragement would you give to young Pasifika students or our community who might be thinking about pursuing psychology?

Go for it! You are needed in psychology! Unfortunately, psychology has and continues to operate through a Western lens. A lens that has resulted in the production of research and practices that do not always reflect what is best for us. You can serve your community and make meaningful change by bringing your unique viewpoint to psychology! Just be yourself and don't give up. It won't go perfectly (it took me multiple attempts to get accepted into the clinical programme!), but it will all be worth it!

Research Space

In this section we highlight the latest Pacific research in Psychology and its relevance to practitioners and researchers.

To Love and to Serve: Exploring the Strengths of Pacific Youth, and Mobilising Them for Community Wellbeing and Transformative Change

Veukiso-Ulugia, A., McLean-Orsborn, S., Nofo'akifolau, R., & Fleming, T. (2025). *Youth*.

Why it matters: Explores the strengths of Pacific youth in Aotearoa and how those strengths can be mobilised to support community wellbeing and transformative change.

DOI link: [View article](#)

Pacific peoples' conceptualisations of depression in Aotearoa New Zealand: Findings from a cross-sectional survey

Kapeli, S. A., McLean-Orsborn, S., Singh, I., et al. (2025). *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand*.

Why it matters: Surveys 548 Pacific people and finds strong recognition of depression symptoms alongside a preference for both informal (friends/whānau) and formal support, challenging the assumption of low mental health literacy among Pacific communities.

DOI link: [View article](#)

Innovating through tradition: kava-talanoa as a culturally aligned medico-behavioral therapeutic approach to amelioration of PTSD symptoms

Aporosa, S. A., Itoga, D., Ioane, J., et al. (2025). *Frontiers in Psychology*.

Why it matters: Outlines a Pacific-led clinical programme integrating kava and talanoa for PTSD treatment, demonstrating a culturally grounded therapeutic approach rooted in Pacific tradition.

DOI link: [View article](#)

Pacific Islander Culture-specific Psychotherapy Scale: development and initial psychometric evaluation

Allen, G. E. K., Suh, H. N., Hee, C., & Conklin, H. (2025). *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*.

Why it matters: Introduces a culture-specific measure to assess how well psychotherapy aligns with Pacific Islander cultural expectations—useful for service design and evaluation.

DOI link: [View article](#)

Mai mana: Exploring Pacific peoples' experiences of resilience in Aotearoa

Taumoepeau, M., Taungapeau, F., Lucas, M., et al. (2025). *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*.

Why it matters: Highlights multilayered resilience among Pacific peoples, showing that family support and spirituality are central to wellbeing and consistent with holistic Pacific worldviews.

DOI link: [View article](#)

"It would ruin my life": Pacific Islander Male Adolescents' Perceptions of Mental Health Help-Seeking—An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Focus Group Study

Garrett, M. F., Cutrer-Párraga, E. A., Allen, G. E. K., et al. (2025). *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*.

Why it matters: Identifies stigma, fear of consequences, and cultural misalignment as barriers to help-seeking among Pacific male teens. Pointing to the need for culturally safe engagement strategies.

DOI link: [View article](#)

If you have recently published an article you would like promoted in the newsletter and on the Pasifikology website, please send the links to: pasifikology@gmail.com

News

Pathways in Psychology webinar

On October 13, Pasifikology hosted a *Pathways in Psychology* webinar showcasing the diverse routes Pasifika peoples are taking toward registration as psychologists. Five Pasifikology Executives shared their journeys: Dr Elizabeth Mati and Peati Mene-Vaele (Clinical Psychology), Nicholas Cao (Health Psychology), Hana Asi-Pakieto (Counselling Psychology), and Sonia Pope (Educational Psychology). Each speaker offered practical insights into navigating study and registration, along with reflections on the challenges and supports that shaped their careers.

Seventeen attendees joined the interactive session, asking thoughtful questions about programme entry and pathways for Pasifika students. A recurring theme was the power of lived experience, rooted in Pasifika values, as an essential strength that enriches the profession and ensures psychology in Aotearoa continues to reflect the heart and realities of Pasifika communities.

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