



# Dunedin Pacific Education Conversation: *Findings Summary*

Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, Kia orana, Talofa ni, Fakaalofa lahi atu, Ni sa bula vinaka, Kia ora.

**We want to express our gratitude to everyone who shared their ideas and opinions at our Dunedin Fono.**

**We know that to build a system that responds to the unique identities, languages and cultures of our Pacific communities we must continue to work together. We will be returning to communities later in 2019 to share our response and to continue the conversation.**

## Important knowledge & skills

A strong sense of identity is a hugely important education outcome and should be prioritised alongside other skills like literacy and numeracy.

*"[We need] to encourage the Pasifika child to value their Pasifika way of thinking... The Pacific child has a lot to offer, a lot to bring to the table that will make this place country, richer, abundant and vibrant with life."*

We think there should be a balance between technology and digital literacy and key people skills.

## Teaching & learning

We want more Pacific teachers and more culturally capable teachers.

We are worried about having to choose between having a strong cultural identity and participating in cultural activities at school and academic opportunities.

*"Brown and brainy - don't discourage me from joining cultural initiatives in order to better pursue academic success."*

Early Childhood Education provides a strong sense of belonging, a focus on the individual child, a holistic curriculum but that is lost the further you get along the education pathway.

*"Children in our preschool are so proud to be Samoan, Tonga etc. Their culture is everywhere. It is not like this when they go to school."*

We want an inclusive curriculum throughout compulsory and tertiary education. This means a stronger focus on Māori and Pacific health needs and cultural competency in health-related fields such as medicine and dentistry. It means more Pacific literature, contexts, history and language in the school curriculum.

*"[We need the] Curriculum to better reflect our bicultural history as a lead into our own history as Pasifika."*

We also want our learning to be less individualistic and to have more opportunities to learn as a community.

## The role of families & communities

We recognise and value the role of family in passing on language, cultural perspectives, values and rituals to our children. We want to see this knowledge and the knowledge of elders and grandparents utilised in schools.

*"Need to make learning a family event. Everyone in the family should be responsible for education. There is a call for honesty from all parties involved."*

The expectations of the parent's role is different between school and home. Some of us worry that schools assume that because the way we engage and support our children looks different to the school's expectation that parents are not engaged. Many of us want to be supported to engage in different ways.

*"Schools complain parents don't engage but they need to engage with parents on their terms."*

## Defining Success

There is a strong sense of success as a communal, shared value that is grounded in fulfilling the dreams of your family. Ideas of success sometimes differ between generations.

*"Our parents came from the Islands for us to get better opportunities, so we feel that pressure... We tell our kids 'failure is an option' but our parents would not have said that to us."*

## Bias & Racism

Many of us and our parents have experienced racism in a variety of education settings. Young people are particularly worried about being harassed for getting 'special treatment' via scholarships and other supports. Some of us have been verbally abused or the target of jokes because of our colour/race.

*"[We need an] Understanding of racism and how it manifests within the school environment. Pacific Islanders and Maori are frowned upon as they have their own unique pathways into education."*

Others of us have been told we were dumb or that teachers had low expectations of us. This made us feel devalued and degraded, and we felt that it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

We want to feel better equipped to have conversations about race and issues of equity,

*"Educate us while we are young about how to deal with racist attitudes - "This will probably happen to you but if it does 1. Don't worry about them, they don't know you. 2. You are valuable. 3. You are capable."*

More broadly, we want people to have a better understanding of the diversity of the Pacific population. Some of us want to see power and resources shared when it comes to making decisions about what is best for Pacific education.

