



## Blenheim Fono: Feedback Summary

*“Support - more funding from the government for ESOL students secondary and tertiary. Learn and understand English well before mainstream learning and national curriculum.”*  
Tongan adult

*“IELTS is a huge barrier for our people here in Blenheim - many are first generation straight from the islands struggling to get into a tertiary institution.”*  
Samoan parent

*“Are you applying for head boy? How many badges do you have? Hardly any, because we don't get badges for what we do - arts, community.”* Pacific student

*“When one of us succeeds in school intellectually... then the teacher treats us like we're a different breed. Like who would have thought an Islander is super smart? They have in their head that Islanders are dumb.”*  
Pacific student

### Are the proposed areas important?

- Agreement on the priorities presented and a number of comments about people's own experiences
- A number of people agree that the definition of success is too narrow and some suggest that Pacific families only think of Tertiary/university as a successful pathway and need to know more about other pathways
- Many comments gave examples of experiencing racism and discrimination but suggestion that 'ending racism' is unrealistic and needs re-wording
- There is support for valuing both English and heritage languages
- Playgroups need more support, as they are "the breeding ground for first language in Blenheim"
- Youth noted having more Pacific teachers, addressing racism and redefining success as particularly important. They also pointed to the shame that some of their families feel when engaging with schools because of their limited English. They get nervous to come into school.

### Is there something missing? What would you change?

- Schools being supported and adequately resourced to respond to these needs
- IELTS is a huge barrier for overseas trained teachers and for those wanting to study
- Youth noted that hauora/student wellbeing is missing. Need to address mental health issues, suicide rates and balancing academic success with positive mental health
- Young people want to see teachers educated on Pacific cultures. They shared about getting in trouble for not making eye contact with teachers when they are trying to be respectful and feeling like teachers assume they're not smart. Young people noted how Palagi teachers sometimes call on them for a 'cultural perspective' and how that makes them feel less included and more isolated.
- More support for learning English
- Split up racism and discrimination and valuing Pacific identities

### What questions do you have?

- How will we know if the actions work? Who will drive the plan? Is it for Pacific learners only? Will the Action Plan be region specific?

### A note from young people

- On top of being a minority, being LGBTQIA+ sets you back even more and contributes to anxiety, suicide. There is confusion about it being taboo to talk about but also being part of the culture (fa'afafine etc.). Need safe spaces to discuss as many are fearful guidance counsellors will tell families
- Some said that when the Ministry or representatives of 'big white people' come, there is a need to act like there is no disunity in the community but there are things that no-one wants to address

## What does success look like for you?

**Top 3**

*Pacific learners and their families feel accepted and included*    *Pacific learners and their families are free from racism and discrimination in education*    *There are no financial barriers to accessing education for Pacific learners and families*

**Top 8**

*Pacific learners have the skills to succeed in the workforce*    *Education leaders do things to show they value Pacific cultures*    *Pacific learners and families can access support for using English, if needed*    *Pacific learners can learn about their culture and heritage*    *Pacific learners and their families feel their subject choices create good opportunities for their future*