



PASIFIKA
ORGANISATIONAL
GUIDELINES

Working with Pasifika

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Prepared by Moana Connect for New Zealand Rugby

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the many people, teams and clubs that have contributed to the development of these Organisational Guidelines. This work builds on insight, collaboration, and advocacy to strengthen how NZR engages with, supports, and represents Pasifika communities across the rugby system.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

'Aiga	The family network, encompassing immediate and wider relatives connected through shared responsibility, care, and belonging.
Alofa	Love, compassion, and care expressed through actions and relationships.
Cultural Responsiveness	The ability of an organisation to understand, respect, and appropriately respond to the cultural needs and practices of Pasifika individuals.
Kai/Mea'ai	Food shared as part of hospitality, connection, and care within Pasifika settings.
Kava	A traditional Pasifika ceremonial drink used to support talanoa, relationship-building, and respectful dialogue.
Lotu	Prayer or faith-based reflection used to open or close gatherings, acknowledging collective purpose and respect.settings.
NZR	New Zealand Rugby
PU	Provincial Union
Talanoa	A process of inclusive, participatory, and transparent dialogue. Talanoa provides opportunities to discuss authentic knowledge grounded in Pacific values and principles. It is a format for inclusive, collaborative meetings and which encourages greater participation and where important contributions can be made ¹ .
Ula	A ceremonial garland used to welcome, acknowledge, or honour individuals.
Vā	The relational space between people, space and time that must be respected, nurtured, and maintained. The Vā holds peoples relationships with ancestors, land, oceans, and each other – it is therefore sacred.
Wellbeing	The overall health and happiness of individuals, including physical, mental, spiritual and emotional aspects.

1 Vaoileti TM. 2006. Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. Waikato Journal of Education 12: 21–34.

Vaoileti TM. 2011. Talanoa, manulua and founa ako: Frameworks for using enduring Tongan educational ideas for education in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Unpublished doctoral thesis). University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.



CONTENTS

Executive Summary	6
Purpose	8
Principles	9
Pasifika in Rugby profile	10
NZR Pasifika Organisational Guidelines	14
Guideline One: Build and show cultural responsiveness to Pasifika peoples	15
Guideline Two: Work in genuine partnership with Pasifika communities	17
Guideline Three: Connect and communicate effectively with Pasifika families	19
Guideline Four: Promote Pasifika identity and visibility	20
Guideline Five: Resource and sustain Pasifika leadership and capability	21
Guideline Six: Grow and support Pasifika talent through mentoring	22
Guideline Seven: Monitor and report progress for Pasifika outcomes	23
Guidelines Matrix	24
Conclusion	25

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pasifika peoples are central to the success and identity of rugby in Aotearoa, yet system gaps in representation, cultural competence, partnership and support continue to limit their experiences. These Organisational Guidelines apply across the rugby system - NZR, Super Rugby clubs, Provincial Unions, clubs and community rugby organisations, and outline practical actions to strengthen outcomes for Pasifika players, staff, volunteers and communities.

The guidelines are informed by interview insights, survey findings and talanoa with Pasifika stakeholders. They respond to recurring themes: inconsistent cultural capability, limited pathways for Pasifika leadership, reliance on a small number of Pasifika staff, fragmented engagement across the system, and the need for more visible and authentic representation. They are intended to be used alongside NZR's Pasifika cultural competency programme and local relationship-building, rather than as a stand-alone checklist.

Seven guidelines provide direction on cultural responsiveness, partnership, communication with families, visibility and identity, capability building, mentoring, and monitoring progress. Each guideline includes clear expectations and practical examples that organisations can adapt to their contexts and situations.

The Guidelines are:

1. Build and show cultural responsiveness to Pasifika peoples
2. Work in partnership with Pasifika communities
3. Connect and communicate effectively with Pasifika families
4. Promote Pasifika identity and visibility
5. Resource and sustain Pasifika leadership and capability
6. Grow and support Pasifika talent through mentoring
7. Monitor and report progress for Pasifika outcomes

The aim of the guidelines is to accelerate the shift within the rugby system from informal, individual-driven efforts to consistent, structured and cultural grounded practice. By doing so, rugby organisations can strengthen trust, inclusion and performance, and ensure that Pasifika peoples can flourish and lead at every level of the game.



PURPOSE

Pasifika peoples have long shaped rugby in Aotearoa through playing, coaching, refereeing, administration, volunteering and community leadership. Their contribution is central to the success, identity and reach of the game. Yet their experiences across the system continue to show gaps in representation, cultural capability, pathways and support.

NZR's Strategy 2025 sets a clear ambition for the game: to enhance the welfare of all players. The NZR Pasifika Strategy 2024–2029 builds on this by setting a shared vision to enable, embrace and enhance positive outcomes for Pasifika across rugby. The Strategy's four pou: Kelekele (preparing the soil), Totō (planting the seed), Tubu (growing our Pasifika people), and Lālanga (weaving a shared vision) provide the framework for a more inclusive and culturally grounded system.

While Pasifika are strongly represented on the field, their presence off the field, particularly in leadership, governance, and other non-playing roles remains limited.

The Guidelines provide practical direction on how NZR, Provincial Unions, Super Rugby clubs, and the wider rugby system can work with Pasifika. They outline clear expectations and approaches for cultural capability, partnerships, engagement, and leadership development across the system, connecting governance, operations, and day-to-day practice with rugby's shared purpose: Inspiring and Unifying through rugby.

PRINCIPLES

Position on Engagement with Māori and Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi remains a foundational commitment for NZR and within the rugby system. While these Guidelines focus on Pasifika responsiveness, they acknowledge the long-standing relationships between tangata whenua and Pasifika peoples. Pasifika advancement complements, rather than competes with Te Tiriti commitments.

These Guidelines do not direct how NZR engages with Māori; that work sits with the Māori Rugby Board and the NZR, as well as within established Treaty and Māori engagement frameworks.

Respect, Safety, and Dignity

Everyone in rugby must be treated with dignity. Safe environments – physical, cultural and psychological – are essential for Pasifika players, staff, volunteers and communities. Respectful behaviour is a baseline expectation at all levels of the game.

Equity, Inclusion, and Meaningful Engagement

Equity requires identifying and removing barriers to Pasifika participation and leadership across all levels of rugby. Inclusion means Pasifika communities see themselves reflected in decisions, roles, and representation. Engagement must be genuine, interactive, and tailored to local contexts.

Relationships, Reciprocity, and Collective Wellbeing

Strong relationships underpin good outcomes. Rugby organisations will build and maintain relationships with Pasifika communities, families, and leaders through reciprocity, trust, and open communication. This reflects Be Passionate and acknowledges that collective wellbeing is central to both Pacific and rugby values.

Accountability, Learning, and Improvement

Commitments must translate into action. Organisations will track progress, seek feedback and adjust practice as needed. Cultural capability and leadership development are ongoing expectations, not one-off activities, and apply to all staff and leaders.

PASIFIKA IN RUGBY PROFILE

This section outlines key findings from the NZR Pasifika Responsiveness Survey (December 2024), and related Pasifika-focused work on representation and experiences. The findings help explain the need for these Guidelines, and provide the evidence base for strengthening cultural responsiveness, equity, and wellbeing across the rugby system.

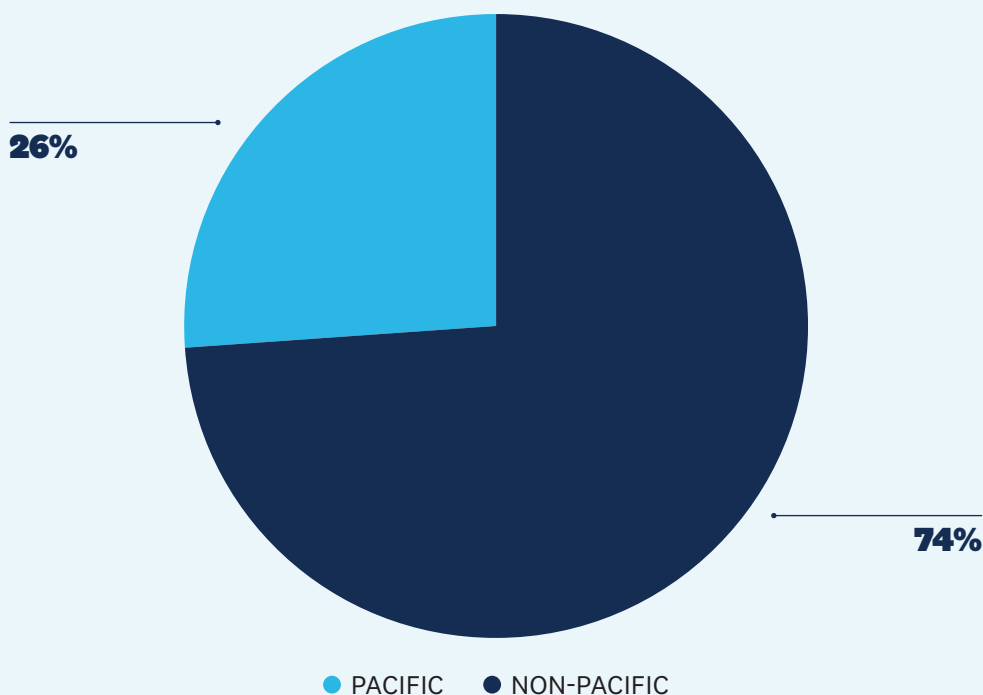
Statistical Overview

The 2024 Pasifika Responsiveness Survey received 222 responses from across the rugby system. 169 respondents identified as non-Pasifika while 53 respondents identified as Pasifika. Pasifika participants made up 26% of total respondents. Most Pasifika participants were from Provincial Unions (43%) or were NZR staff (42%).

- Gender: 74% of Pasifika respondents were male, 26% female.
- Employment status: 52% of Pasifika respondents were unpaid volunteers, compared to 23% of non-Pasifika respondents.

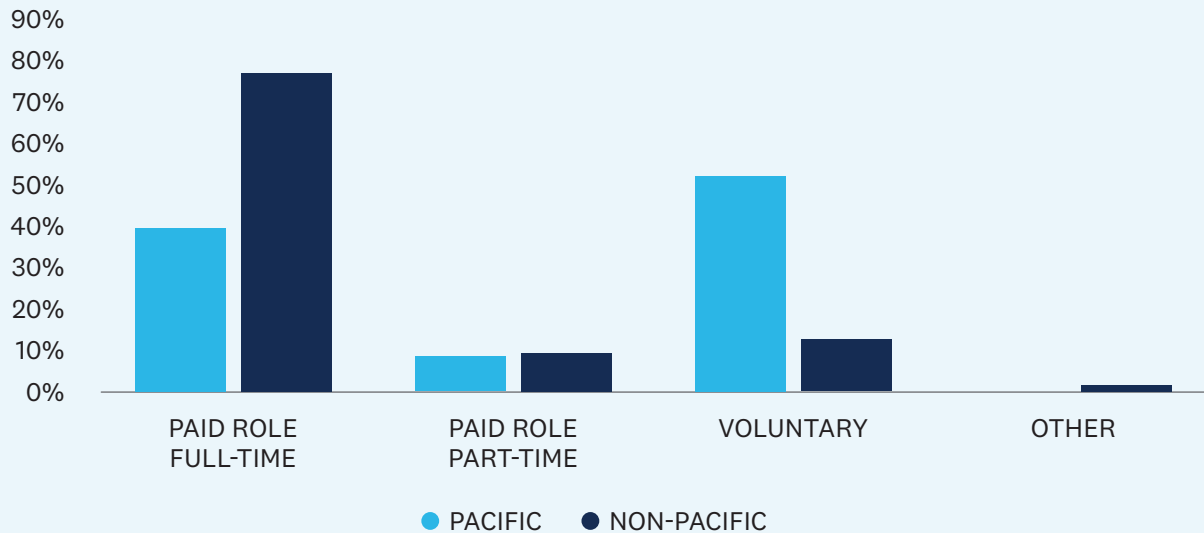
ETHNICITY

Figure 1: Proportion of Pacific to non-Pacific participants



REMUNERATION

Figure 2: Participant remuneration by Pacific or non-Pacific Ethnicity



MOTIVATIONS AND ASPIRATIONS

- 56% of Pasifika respondents cited the opportunity to “give back” to their community as their main motivation.
- 47% identified developing and supporting the rugby community as their key aspiration.
- Barriers to advancement included limited support for leadership (40%) and restricted access to professional development or career pathways (37%).
- Passion for the game itself ranked much lower among Pasifika respondents (7%) than non-Pasifika (29%).

“Using sport as a vehicle to help build positive habits, hauora and whanaungatanga within team environments, community. Developing skills for life and to foster a love for the game.”

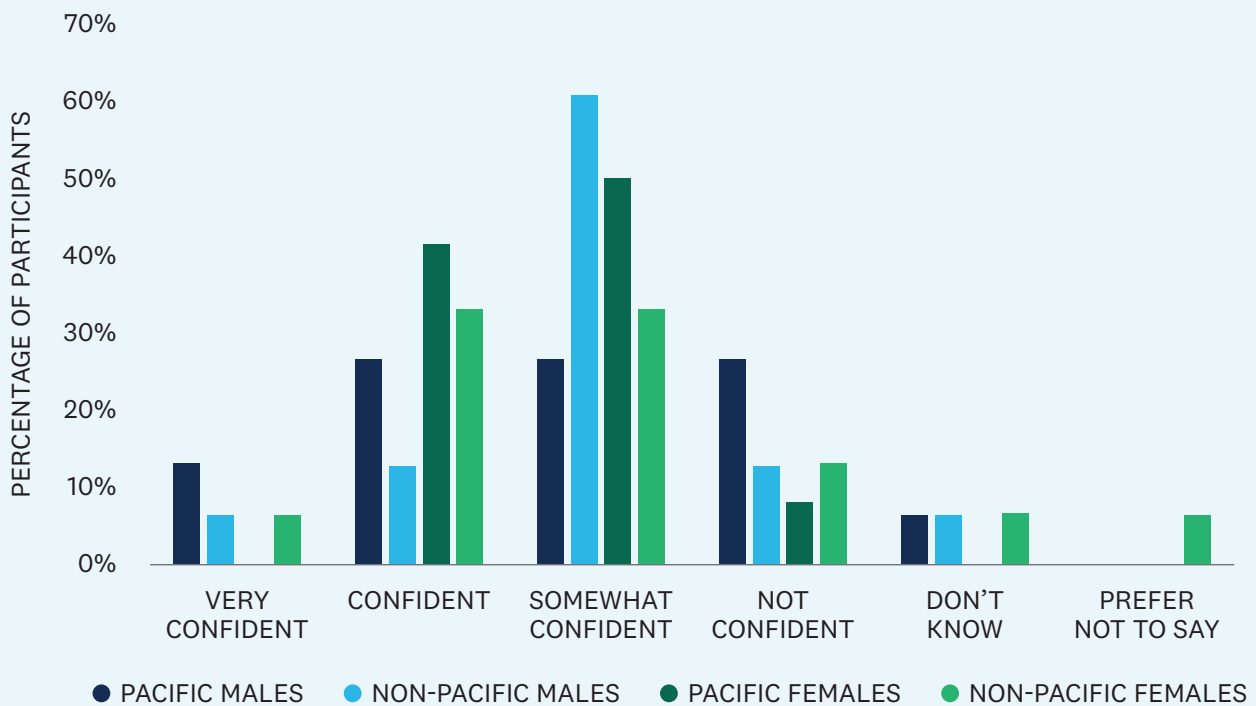
UNDERSTANDING OF THE PASIFIKA STRATEGY

- Pasifika respondents were generally more confident in understanding the Strategy than non-Pasifika.
- Most respondents agreed that NZR should create opportunities for Pasifika staff, build inclusive environments, and strengthen ties with Pasifika communities.
- Respondents also wanted clearer communication and visibility of the Strategy through roadshows and short explanatory resources.

“We have just under 50% of our athletes that have Pacific heritage, so it is important we understand how we can support them to be the best they can be. Acknowledging the cultural gap between the majority of our management and the playing group.”

PASIFIKA STRATEGY CONFIDENCE

Figure 3: Confidence in understanding your role in the Pasifika Strategy by ethnicity and gender



WELLBEING

- 39% of clubs or unions did not meaningfully assess Pasifika wellbeing.
- 55% reported no wellbeing support for Pasifika non-players.
- Where support existed, it was often informal (e.g. check-ins, peer groups).
- Incorporating community and cultural activities was viewed as the most effective means of improving wellbeing and trust.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS AND INCLUSION

- Non-Pasifika respondents rated their organisations as more culturally responsive than Pasifika staff did. Alternatively, Pasifika women and non-Pasifika women were least likely to view their clubs as responsive.
- Common inclusion activities included celebrating Pasifika language weeks, inviting community leaders, faith acknowledgements, and hosting cultural events.
- Some Pasifika respondents described ongoing barriers such as tokenism, resistance to change, and lack of cultural competency.

“Accepting that church is a big part of Pasifika culture and understanding that there are many different churches and relationships between Pasifika groups.”

BARRIERS, CHALLENGES, AND CONFLICT

- The most common barriers were lack of understanding of Pasifika cultures (30%), negative attitudes toward Pasifika representation, and limited funding for Pasifika initiatives.
- 20% of Pasifika respondents reported conflict experiences, often linked to bias, poor communication, or financial tension.
- Conflict resolution processes were inconsistent and rarely integrated cultural methods of reconciliation.

“Racism. Lack of understanding of how to engage with Pasifika people or how participating in rugby might fit within the wider context of Pasifika peoples’ lives, e.g. - family commitments, family overseas, faith.”

“Not enough dedicated resource.”

CAPACITY AND CAPABILITY DEVELOPMENT

- Pasifika respondents were less confident (47%) than non-Pasifika (85%) that their organisations were receptive to cultural responsiveness training.
- Over half (53%) had not accessed Pasifika-focused learning or development.
- Only 47% reported any training or workshops related to Pasifika responsiveness.
- 83% of all respondents expressed interest in further learning about Pasifika worldviews, cultural safety, and bias.

“Community Engagement Sessions: We held sessions with local Pasifika leaders and community members to discuss their needs and perspectives, enhancing our understanding of how to better serve the Pacific community. ...[Regular] meetings were held to reflect on our practices and gather feedback from delegates and village reps on how we can improve our engagement with Pacific players and their families.”

NZR PASIFIKA ORGANISATIONAL GUIDELINES

Development approach

A talanoa-informed interview process was used to understand how Pasifika peoples experience the rugby system, particularly in non-playing roles. Semi-structured interviews were held with a cross-section of NZR, Provincial Union, Super Rugby, club, school and community representatives, including Pasifika and non-Pasifika staff, volunteers and leaders.

Interviews focused on cultural responsiveness, partnership, capability, representation, wellbeing and pathways. Notes were thematically coded and compared with findings from the NZR Pasifika Responsiveness Survey and previous Pasifika-focused work.

This approach provided a clear, experience-based view of current practice, strengths and issues affecting Pasifika people across the system.

Summary of Stakeholder Insights Informing NZR Guidelines

Analysis of interviews and survey findings highlights several consistent themes across the rugby system:

- Leadership and representation: Pasifika are strongly represented on the field but underrepresented in leadership, governance and paid roles. Clear pathways and genuine inclusion are needed to avoid tokenism.
 - Engagement and relationships: Current engagement with Pacific communities is often transactional. Trust requires sustained presence, face-to-face relationships, and involvement of families and community leaders.
 - Capability and learning: Staff and leaders need structured learning on Pacific worldviews and values. Mentoring, particularly for Pacific women, is important for confidence and progression.
 - Māori–Pasifika relations: Some tensions exist around representation and governance. These require sensitive, system-level attention to ensure equitable inclusion.
 - Strategic and structural alignment: Pacific priorities need to be clearly visible in organisational systems, supported by reporting, accountability and long-term planning.
- Cultural responsiveness: Pacific diversity is often overlooked, and cultural practices are not always understood or supported at all levels. There is a need for culturally safe spaces and visible celebration of Pacific identity.

GUIDELINE ONE:

BUILD AND SHOW CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS TO PASIFIKA PEOPLES

Rugby organisations will strengthen their cultural capability by understanding Pasifika worldviews, values and diversity, and by embedding these into everyday practice. Cultural responsiveness means recognising that Pasifika communities are not homogenous, and adjusting how people and systems work, communicate, and make decisions in ways that reflect cultural respect and understanding.

Culturally responsive practice includes awareness of behaviours often misinterpreted within mainstream settings (such as humility when referring to themselves for other roles and opportunities or having limited eye contact when talking to those in leadership roles) and understanding these as expressions of respect rather than disengagement. Staff and volunteers are expected to build this capability through ongoing learning, including NZR's Pasifika Cultural Competency Programme, and through meaningful engagement with Pasifika families, communities and leaders.

Pasifika perspectives should be visible in policy development, leadership practice, programme design and performance systems. When cultural responsiveness is modelled consistently, environments become safer, more inclusive and more effective for Pasifika and for the wider rugby community.

“We are Pacific but we are also a little bit different from each other... even within that, there's Tongans that grew up here and Tongans that grew up in Tonga... and their perception of self and identity.”

System Expectations

- Pasifika cultural competence is an expected skill for all staff and volunteers.
- Pasifika knowledge and values inform decision-making and day to day interactions.
- Staff access regular, practical, quality Pasifika cultural learning opportunities.
- Pasifika perspectives are visible in policy development, training, and evaluation.

Examples of Good Practice

These examples illustrate what partnership behaviour can look like in practice. They are not a checklist.

- Deliver a blended Pasifika Cultural Capability learning programme across NZR and the rugby system on Pasifika worldviews, cultural diversity, and day-to-day practices such as lotu, ula, kava, and kai.
- Ensure Pasifika advisors or facilitators are appropriate and/or available to support programmes, workshops, or events involving Pasifika groups.
- Include simple prompts in organisational planning tools (e.g. Have Pasifika perspectives been considered?).
- Acknowledge Pasifika cultural events and protocols in operations (e.g. Pacific language weeks in NZ, family involvement, prayers where appropriate).

- Where specialist support is required (e.g. wellbeing), connect Pasifika people with providers who understand a Pasifika worldview.

“Sometimes they think they know one and box it across... probably building more cultural competency around all staff and what that looks like.”



GUIDELINE TWO:

WORK IN GENUINE PARTNERSHIP WITH PASIFIKA COMMUNITIES

Partnerships with Pasifika communities must be grounded in trust, reciprocity and shared purpose. Relationship-building cannot rely on a single group or staff member. It sits across teams and leadership. Advisory groups such as Tausoa Fa'atasi Pacific Advisory Group (PAG) and the Pacific Rugby Council (PRC) provide important insight but are not the only sources of Pasifika voice or partnership.

Direct relationships with Pasifika communities, families, churches, schools and volunteer networks provide diverse representation and help decisions reflect regional or local realities. Partnerships grow through consistent presence over time – showing up at community events, supporting local initiatives or activities, and maintaining regular talanoa with those who support rugby across participation, officiating, coaching and high-performance pathways.

Partnership agreements can support clarity, but strong partnerships rely on relational practice: being available, being visible, and maintaining trust.

“We’ve made a start... but we need to know who our Pacific community are out there across referees, coaches, volunteers – in community and high-performance.”

Organisational Expectations

- Partnerships are long-term and reciprocal, not transactional.
- Pasifika leaders or groups are engaged early and meaningfully in decisions that affect them.
- Roles, responsibilities and expectations are clear and jointly agreed.
- Partnership responsibilities are shared so no one person carries the load.
- Partnerships are reviewed to ensure they continue to be useful and respectful.

Examples of Good Practice

- Maintain a current understanding of Pasifika groups in your region, including those supporting schools, clubs and volunteer networks.
- Meet with Pasifika partners throughout the year to review needs and priorities.
- Set aside time or a budgeted amounts to support joint initiatives with Pasifika partners.
- Involve Pasifika partners in planning or working groups for relevant activities.

Pasifika partners are considered as Pasifika communities, organisations and/or leaders who contribute to rugby across Aotearoa. They include families, churches, schools, community organisations, volunteer networks, cultural leaders, and staff or players who hold influence within Pasifika communities.

Pasifika partners are defined by active relationships, trust and shared purpose. They are not limited to formal membership or organisational roles.

“It’s the relationships – when we helped tidy up the community, went to the school, the marae... that created genuine connection.”



GUIDELINE THREE:

CONNECT AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH PASIFIKA FAMILIES

Family is central to Pasifika wellbeing. Pasifika families often play a central role in decisions affecting players, volunteers and staff. Effective connection and communication require clarity, respect and an understanding of family preferences, including language, cultural context and the way information is shared.

Families engage more confidently when information is clear, accessible and provides enough context for them to understand purpose and impact.

Communication should support belonging, safety and shared understanding across all levels of rugby. This includes providing time for families to process information, involving them early in key discussions, and recognising the role of wider 'āiga and community networks. Effective communication is relational, not transactional, and builds trust over time.

“Our kids aren’t forthcoming at times because they don’t always want to be upfront... even eye contact... not understanding cultural values can be a barrier.”

Organisational Expectations

- Communication with Pasifika families is clear, timely and respectful.
- Staff seek to understand preferred communication channels and adjust accordingly.
- Information is accessible and provides enough context for families to engage meaningfully.
- Families are included early in discussions that affect participation, wellbeing or development.
- Staff create environments where families feel welcome to ask questions and contribute.

Examples of Good Practice

- Use plain language and Pacific languages when communicating with families.
- Provide opportunity for talanoa in both formal (e.g. meetings, AGM) and informal (e.g. coffee catch up) settings.
- Support Pasifika staff, volunteers, and connectors to be visible at engagements and events where appropriate.
- Acknowledge family contributions and engagement in communications and events.

“Parents that want to ula their daughters... there’s hesitation, not knowing if they’re allowed. Understanding those things matters.”

GUIDELINE FOUR:

PROMOTE PASIFIKA IDENTITY AND VISIBILITY

Pasifika identity and visibility must be reflected authentically across rugby environments, communications and leadership. Pasifika peoples must be able to see themselves represented in ways that are respectful, accurate and grounded in local contexts. This visibility strengthens belonging, supports connection and contributes to culturally safe environments across all levels of rugby.

NZR, Provincial Unions, Super Rugby clubs and rugby organisations must create space for Pasifika peoples, including women and girls, who are often less visible in rugby settings, to express their culture with confidence and pride. Visibility is not only what organisations display, but what Pasifika people are supported to lead, share and demonstrate in their own ways.

Representation must extend beyond players. Pasifika staff, volunteers, officials, coaches and leaders should be visible across the organisation's stories, imagery and roles.

“That visibility piece... across different roles – referees, coaches, administrators – not just players. Pacific women too.”

Organisational Expectations

- Pasifika identity is represented accurately and respectfully across environments, communications and events.
- Pasifika leadership, representation and contribution is visible across all roles, particularly women, schools and non-playing roles.

- Pasifika culture is celebrated as part of rugby's shared identity.
- Public messaging and imagery reflect the diversity of Pasifika communities.
- Communications reinforce inclusion and pride in Pasifika contribution.

Examples of Good Practice

- Celebrate or support events like Pasifika Language Weeks (one or multiple), a Pasifika celebration round, or Pasifika-led events (e.g. ASB Polyfest, Pasifika independence days) in ways that fit your local context.
- Share stories of Pasifika staff, volunteers, referees, coaches and administrators through structured storytelling in digital and printed features.
- Use Pasifika imagery authentically in communications where appropriate.
- Promote or support local Pacific rugby competitions or events in your community.
- When planning cultural activities (e.g. Pasifika rounds), work with Pasifika partners to ensure authenticity and avoid tokenism.

“We need more stories about who Pasifika leaders are – not just former players.”

“Village games, Pacific comps – these things build identity and pride.”

GUIDELINE FIVE:

RESOURCE AND SUSTAIN PASIFIKA LEADERSHIP AND CAPABILITY

Pasifika leadership strengthens decision-making, cultural safety and connection across the rugby system. NZR, Provincial Unions, Super Rugby clubs and rugby organisations must invest in the capability, development and progression of Pasifika staff, volunteers and emerging leaders. This includes recognising the additional cultural and relational load Pasifika people often carry, and ensuring this work is valued, supported and not left to a small group of individuals.

Organisations should avoid placing cultural or community responsibilities on one Pasifika staff member, as this leads to burnout and limits long-term capability. A team-based or network approach strengthens support, shares responsibility and improves consistency and wellbeing across the system. Clear roles, structures and budgets also help build sustainable capability in both people and systems.

Leadership development must be intentional. Pasifika people should have access to fair recruitment processes, mentoring, and development opportunities that support progression into coaching, officiating, administration, governance and senior leadership roles. Investment should reflect the diversity of Pasifika peoples, women, and those in regions with smaller Pasifika populations.

“We’ve got to think systematically... our Māori and Pasifika population is only going to grow. At the moment we have one role... one person.”

Organisational Expectations

- Pasifika leadership roles are supported,

celebrated and resourced.

- Pasifika work is recognised, appropriately resourced, and embedded in annual planning and budgeting.
- Organisations avoid relying on one Pasifika staff member by building team-based support.
- Staff have access to culturally anchored learning, mentoring and development.
- Pasifika Strategy priorities are reflected in organisations reporting and review processes.

Examples of Good Practice

- Include Pasifika responsibilities in relevant job descriptions.
- Provide training and development opportunities for staff working with Pasifika communities.
- Identify staff or volunteers who can act as Pasifika connectors or navigators.
- Allocate a dedicated budget line for Pasifika engagement and capability.
- Provide clear pathways into coaching, refereeing, governance, and administration for Pasifika.

“We need to get away from representation and focus on contribution... cultural capital is a strength, but we can’t leave people standing alone.”

GUIDELINE SIX:

GROW AND SUPPORT PASIFIKA TALENT THROUGH MENTORING

NZR, Provincial Unions, Super Rugby clubs and rugby organisations must provide structured, culturally grounded mentoring to support Pasifika players, staff, volunteers and emerging leaders at key points in their development. Mentoring strengthens confidence, belonging and progression, and helps people navigate the system, understand expectations and move into coaching, officiating, high-performance, administration and leadership roles.

Mentoring should be intentional and well considered, rather than informal or reliant on existing relationships. Pasifika young people and those in smaller regions often have fewer established networks, making structured mentoring essential to ensure equitable access and support. Mentors should include people with cultural understanding and relevant rugby experience, supported by organisational systems rather than left to individual goodwill.

“We got 21 coaches out of that Samoan coaching course... people who would never have taken it without something made for that community.”

Organisational Expectations

- Mentoring is an organisational and leadership responsibility; is planned and resourced appropriate; and built into the development pathway.
- Pasifika participants are matched with mentors who can support and guide their career and cultural growth.
- Mentoring relationships are structured, supported, and reviewed.

- Organisations avoid relying on a single Pasifika mentor by building wider support networks, including with Pasifika partners.
- Mentorship contributes to retention, organisational confidence and progression into leadership roles.

Examples of Good Practice

- Connect emerging Pasifika staff, referees, coaches, administrators or volunteers with experienced mentors (within the organisation, regionally, or throughout the system, where required).
- Develop a Pasifika women’s mentoring programme, focusing on those in high-performance and non-playing environments.
- Support Pasifika mentors with training, time and recognition for their contribution.
- Connect Pasifika mentees to opportunities such as development camps, leadership training or scholarships.
- Provide simple organisational guidance or training for mentors, include mentoring as part of leadership role descriptions and Key Performance Indicator (KPI), and link mentoring outcomes to annual learning and development reporting.

“Learning about the business is important – but so is knowing that who I am and my culture is OK. Sometimes I was doing karakia for people I didn’t even know two months into the job.”

GUIDELINE SEVEN:

MONITOR AND REPORT PROGRESS FOR PASIFIKA OUTCOMES

Monitoring helps organisations understand whether their actions are improving experiences and outcomes for Pasifika people. NZR, Provincial Unions, Super Rugby clubs and rugby organisations must track progress in ways that are practical, meaningful and aligned to the Pasifika Strategy. Monitoring supports improvement, using data, feedback and observation to know what works, identify gaps and guide next steps.

Progress should be monitored across participation, pathways, cultural capability, leadership representation and quality relationships with Pasifika communities. Monitoring must be supported by simple processes so staff and volunteers can contribute without creating unnecessary burden. Reporting should reflect both quantitative information and lived experience to avoid superficial measures.

“If it’s not in the strategic conversation, it becomes good practice by good people – but it won’t make a dent in policy or culture.”

Organisational Expectations

- Pasifika-related activities, impact and outcomes are monitored, reviewed and reported on regularly.
- Data on Pasifika engagement, participation, and wellbeing informs decision-making within organisations and across the system.

- Reporting includes quantitative and qualitative information.
- Findings are regularly shared with leadership groups and governance, as well as Pasifika partners.
- Reporting includes how progress contributes to delivery of the NZR Pasifika Strategy.

Examples of Good Practice

- Capture Pasifika ethnicity data accurately and consistently across systems.
- Track participation, representation, and pathway progression for Pasifika players, staff and volunteers.
- Integrate Pasifika objectives into organisational reporting. (Could be data)
- Include standing Pasifika updates in governance, executive or team reporting.
- Share key insights with Pasifika partners and families where appropriate.
- Adjust plans and activities based on feedback and data.

“There needs to be strategic visibility, otherwise nothing changes.”

GUIDELINES MATRIX

The examples below show how practice can develop over time. They are not a self-assessment tool. They illustrate how staff and leaders can translate the Guidelines into action, with the three levels showing a progression from early steps to embedded practice.

- Minimum Practice (Getting Started): initial awareness and early actions.
- Building Practice (Growing Confidence): more consistent practice and shared responsibility.
- Embedded Practice (Leading Practice): anchored practice with system-level impact and culturally grounded leadership.

	Minimum Practice	Building Practice	Embedded Practice
Guideline 1: Build and show cultural responsiveness	<p>Completes NZR Pasifika Cultural Competency Programme and applies foundational learning.</p> <p>Demonstrates basic understanding of Pasifika values and cultural differences.</p> <p>Learns and uses basic pronunciation and/or greetings.</p>	<p>Integrates Pasifika perspectives into role planning, communication and daily work.</p> <p>Establishes and maintains ongoing relationships with Pasifika groups or families.</p> <p>Applies cultural concepts (va, alofa, talanoa) in relevant contexts.</p> <p>Invites Pasifika colleagues or community groups to share experiences during staff forums.</p>	<p>Confidently models culturally grounded practice/leadership that promotes safety, trust and belonging.</p> <p>Co-designs learning opportunities with Pasifika staff, unions, and community leaders.</p> <p>Mentors and supports others to strengthen cultural capability across the system.</p>
Guideline 2: Work in partnership with Pasifika communities	<p>Initiates contact with local Pasifika groups or leaders.</p> <p>Participates in talanoa respectfully.</p> <p>Seeks guidance before engaging in Pasifika settings.</p>	<p>Maintains and reports on regular contact with Pasifika partners.</p> <p>Involves communities in relevant planning or decision-making.</p> <p>Uses relational approaches to engage (e.g. talanoa, community-based engagements etc.)</p>	<p>Develops initiatives and partnerships with endorsement from Pasifika partners.</p> <p>Models shared decision-making, responsibilities and accountability with communities and/or partners.</p> <p>Sustains long-term partnerships that support community priorities.</p>
Guideline 3: Connect and communicate effectively with Pasifika families	<p>Communicates clearly and checks for understanding with Pasifika families.</p> <p>Provides information in accessible, plain-language formats.</p> <p>Recognises the role of family in decision making for players/staff.</p>	<p>Adapts communication methods to align with family preferences, including talanoa sessions, telephone calls, and scheduled meetings.</p> <p>Provides appropriate context, reasoning and next steps for decisions.</p> <p>Invites families early into relevant discussions.</p>	<p>Embeds family-centred communication across programmes.</p> <p>Anticipates information needs and engages families proactively.</p> <p>Creates and sustains environments where families feel confident to contribute.</p>

	Minimum Practice	Building Practice	Embedded Practice
Guideline 4: Promote Pasifika identity and visibility	<p>Demonstrates basic awareness of Pasifika presence.</p> <p>Acknowledges diversity of Pasifika and Pasifika cultural events respectfully.</p> <p>Incorporates Pasifika identity in environments and communication where appropriate.</p>	<p>Integrates Pasifika identity into organisational culture</p> <p>Engages Pasifika stakeholders in initiatives where appropriate.</p> <p>Profiles and affirms Pasifika contributions beyond playing roles.</p>	<p>Embeds Pasifika worldviews, values and cultural narratives into organisational culture, strategy and storytelling.</p> <p>Promotes and strengthens Pasifika representation across leadership and governance.</p> <p>Sustains and champions platforms for Pasifika communities to lead cultural expression across system.</p>
Guideline 5: Resource and sustain Pasifika leadership and capability	<p>Enables Pasifika staff to access development opportunities.</p> <p>Identifies gaps in Pasifika representation beyond playing roles.</p> <p>Encourages participation in capability-building activities.</p>	<p>Establishes clear pathways to operational, leadership or governance roles.</p> <p>Provides mentoring, coaching or sponsorship.</p> <p>Builds team-based support so Pasifika staff are not carrying responsibilities alone.</p>	<p>Pasifika leadership is visible, resourced and planned for across levels.</p> <p>Leadership pathways for Pasifika are formalised, supported and monitored for effectiveness.</p> <p>Decisions and resourcing clearly reflect Pasifika Strategy priorities.</p>
Guideline 6: Grow and support Pasifika talent through mentoring	<p>Identifies Pasifika who may benefit from mentoring.</p> <p>Connects individuals with informal guidance or support.</p> <p>Recognises the role of family and community in mentoring.</p>	<p>Establishes structured mentoring with clear expectations.</p> <p>Matches mentees with mentors who understand Pasifika worldviews and rugby contexts.</p> <p>Encourages mentoring opportunities for Pasifika women and youth.</p>	<p>Embeds mentoring into development pathways and transitions.</p> <p>Resources mentoring (time, training, recognition) and reviews quality.</p> <p>Builds and maintain Pasifika mentor network.</p>
Guideline 7: Monitor and report progress for Pasifika outcomes	<p>Collates basic information on Pasifika participation or experiences.</p> <p>Reports issues as they arise.</p> <p>Identifies information gaps.</p>	<p>Tracks progress regularly and shares results internally.</p> <p>Seeks feedback from Pasifika communities and staff.</p> <p>Uses data to adjust programmes and decisions.</p>	<p>Pasifika outcomes highlighted through reporting cycles.</p> <p>Shares progress with leadership, governance and Pasifika partners.</p> <p>Aligns monitoring with Pasifika Strategy priorities and long-term change.</p>

CONCLUSION

Pasifika peoples make a significant and sustained contribution to rugby in Aotearoa. These Guidelines set out clear and practical expectations for strengthening cultural responsiveness, partnership, communication, identity, capability, mentoring and accountability across NZR and the wider rugby system.

The Guidelines draw on evidence from research, interviews, talanoa and community insight. They reflect the experiences of Pasifika players, staff, volunteers, families and leaders who want rugby environments where they can participate, contribute and lead with confidence.

Embedding Pasifika worldviews, maintaining genuine relationships with communities, resourcing capability, and monitoring progress are essential to building safe and effective environments. This work aligns with Te Ara Ranga Tira – the Rugby Way and recognises the trust Pasifika communities place in our rugby stewards.

The examples of good practice included throughout the document support both immediate actions and long-term system development. Together, they outline a shift from informal, individual-led efforts to a more structured and organisation-wide approach that improves outcomes for Pasifika peoples and strengthens the whole rugby system.



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