

08.08.20

Talofa lava Mark Sowden - Government Statistician and Chief Executive of Stats NZ

Fa'afetai lava to you, and your team members who are in the Stats NZ Pacific Engagement Working Group. As a Samoan New Zealander being contacted by Maria and Ropeta to participate in the consultation, the way they hosted the space, and that this work is being done and is valued means a lot. After sharing my thoughts in the fono, I decided I would like to highlight with you directly some thoughts to support the move to deepen and grow Stats NZ engagement with Pacific communities.

The first thought is I often see in many organisations Pacific staff not in cultural advisor roles, are drawn on to share and invest cultural nuance into organisations they are amongst - on top of, and outside of their job description - and in many of the examples there is no pay, or consideration that this is an additional skill set. There is an opportunity as part of the outcomes of this consultation to show us, and say to the Pacific communities of Aotearoa that Stats NZ will ensure organisational pay bands factor in whether staff members speak an indigenous Pacific language, and or brings Pacific cultural expertise. Part of Stats NZ having the ability to engage with our communities is the depth of staff experience and connection to our Pacific communities, having the right people internally, in the right positions and their cultural expertise valued.

The second point which is connected is that it would be an aspiration for our Pacific communities that pathways are being scaffolded so that one day soon we can see a Pacific person as part of the senior leadership team of Stats NZ. I understand that this may be a longer term vision, but I put it before you that if this was something kept in mind of the senior management team there can be focused mentoring and other supports to make this something that could happen, and benefit the whole organisation, and our country.

I am very excited about the outcome of this review, and again say fa'afetai lava for this essential work being done.

Ia manuia,



Josiah Tualamali'i
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