

# The Workforce Sustainability Conference

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## Developing the Pacific Nursing Workforce

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## Demographics

- Pakeha - dominant culture but declining proportionately to other cultural groups due to less than replacement birth rate and declining immigration.
- Asian – rapid population increase primarily due to recent migration growth.
- Maori – steady increase in population due to relatively young population and increased birth rate.
- Pacific - increasing proportion of total population due to relatively young population, increased birthrates and steady migration.
- By the year 2020 it is expected that the proportion of Pacific peoples will be about 12% of the total population.

## Migration patterns over the last 100 years

- Small numbers until the mid 1960's
  - Buoyant economic growth in NZ in 1960 → 1970's drew large numbers out of the Pacific
  - Provided cheap labour for the growing industrial sector
  - Remained locked in underemployment/ unemployment during recessions in late 1970 → 1980's
  - This low economic status reflected in:
    - Poor housing
    - Poor health
    - Poor nutrition
    - Poor education achievement
- Cycle of poverty

## A major issue relating to Pacific peoples health = **ACCESS**

- Defined as
- Availability
  - Affordability
  - Appropriateness

Pacific populations have the highest rates for avoidable hospitalizations:

- Indicates breakdown in primary healthcare
- Results in late presentation and increased acuity

In turn results in high costs to:

- Individual and their families
- High cost to healthcare systems

A major health strategy then is to increase the number of Pacific healthcare practitioners

- Rationale is double edged:
  1. Increased Pacific health workforce directly addresses the issue of access in terms of availability and appropriateness.
  2. Increasing Pacific health professionals has an immediate impact on the economic status of Pacific families and their communities.

## Status of Pacific Health Workforce Participation

- According to 2001 population census, Pacific people s make up 6.2% of the total population
- The total regulated health workforce who self identify as "Pacific" is 1.8% of the total health workforce.
- 3% of Registered and Enrolled Nurses identify as Pacific

	ESTIMATED NO.	EST proportion Maori (%)	EST proportion Pacific (%)	Source
Registered Nurses and Midwives	32,687	7.1%	3.0%	NCNZ 2003

## Origins of the BN (Pacific) Programme

**2001 completed PhD research which looked at the experiences of Pacific women completing Nursing education leading to Registration in the NZ context.**

- 3 major findings
  - Higher drop out rate than other students
  - High maintenance students often requiring repeat opportunities to pass assessments
  - Not well prepared to work with their own communities

## Nursing Education

In an uncritical environment nursing education presumes the values and beliefs of the dominant culture as the "norm" for all cultures.

In this way nursing itself acts as an agency for the reproduction of pakeha culture.

Marginalized "other" experience nursing education from a deficit position.

To become a nurse means becoming enculturated as mainstream (pakeha)

## Working the Hyphen

- The challenge for nursing education in increasingly diverse societies is to prepare practitioners who can work in multiple worlds.



- Led to the development of the Bachelor of Nursing (Pacific) programme at Whitireia. 1<sup>st</sup> intake February 2004. First cohort due to complete November 2006.

## Bachelor of Nursing (Pacific) (work in progress)

- Recruitment / Enrolment
- Course Content
- Support
- Community Response

## What is working? What are the challenges?

- Results so far:
  - Retention rates
  - Success rates
  - Student feedback / self perception
- Challenges
  - Maintaining the distinction
  - Dealing with negative stereotyping and racism
  - Staffing the programme

## Benefits of the programme

While it is still early days, we are confident in making the following claims:

- The programme has been positively embraced by Pacific communities.
- Students are consciously aware they are being prepared to work both in mainstream and in their own Pacific communities
- The programme provides a space for the development of the body of knowledge needed to enhance Pacific health and well-being.