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Pasifika Diaspora in Auckland and Brisbane: Review of Literature

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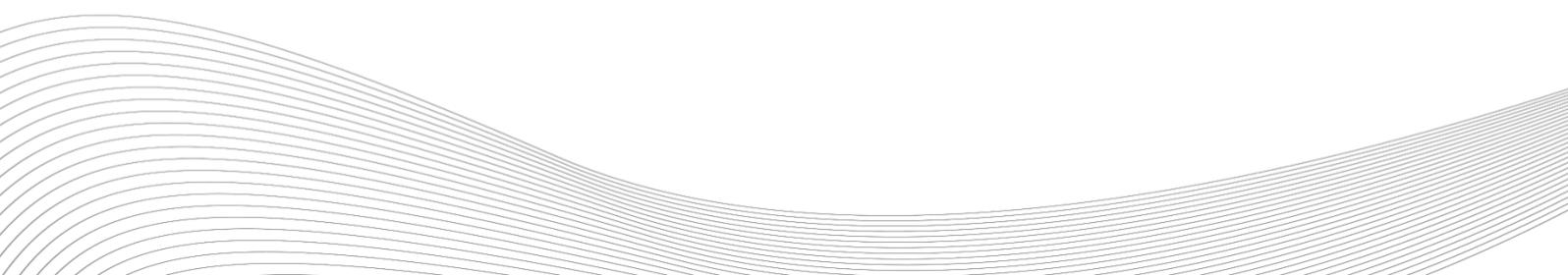
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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

My PhD study focuses on the well-being of Samoan and Tongan groups living in, and moving between, Auckland and Brisbane. This research seeks to capture the voices, perceptions and experiences of these migrants using a mixed methods approach (both qualitative and quantitative data) that incorporates indigenous research methods (Pacific Island frameworks based on cultural knowledge and protocols). This working paper presents a review of literature that is relevant to the focus of the PhD study, concentrating on the *Pasifika* diaspora in Auckland and Brisbane. This paper is the first of a three-part literature review: (1) *Pasifika* diaspora; (2) *Pasifika* well-being; and (3) *Pasifika* methodology.

The existing literature that touches on the Trans-Tasman migration of *Pasifika*, originating from New Zealand and migrating to Australia, is largely focused on describing the evolving Trans-Tasman immigration policies and provides an economic and political discussion surrounding the movements of *Pasifika* between Australia and New Zealand. These discussions consider *Pasifika* within the broader contexts of New Zealanders participating in Trans-Tasman migration and is largely based on Census data.

The available literature relating to the *Pasifika* diaspora based in Australia is sparse in comparison to what is available in the New Zealand context. To date, surveys and studies of the Samoan and Tongan diaspora have been undertaken in Victoria and New South Wales. However, according to Queensland-based reports, the *Pasifika* diaspora residing in Queensland is 'invisible,' and inaccurately recorded in data. Therefore, this paper contributes a holistic *Pasifika* perspective of Trans-Tasman migration between Australia and New Zealand. This paper also contributes an assemblage of information specific to the Samoan and Tongan diaspora groups residing in Queensland. To my knowledge this collation of both qualitative and quantitative data drawn from Australian and New Zealand literature, with a specific focus on *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrants of diaspora residing in Auckland and Brisbane, is the first of its kind.

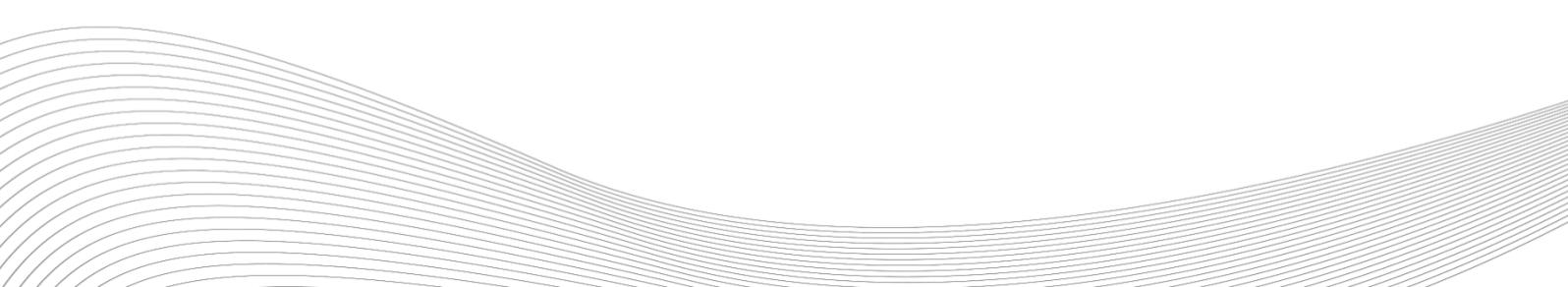


ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Ruth (Lute) Faleolo is a PhD candidate with the Aboriginal Environments Research Centre (AERC), and Institute for Social Science Research (ISSR) - Life Course Centre (LCC), at the University of Queensland. As a New Zealand-born Tongan and *Pasifika* academic, Ruth has a passion for the empowerment of indigenous and migrant communities through social, economic and cultural development. Ruth's research seeks to accurately record *Pasifika* voices on well-being and migration; to analyse the salient links between well-being perspectives, experiences and Trans-Tasman migration. Email: ruth.faleolo@uqconnect.edu.au

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ABSTRACT

Understanding Pasifika Trans-Tasman migrant perceptions and experiences of well-being in Auckland, New Zealand compared to their perceptions and experiences of well-being in Brisbane, Australia is important because there is limited information available on the underlying motives of Pasifika Trans-Tasman migrants moving from New Zealand to settle long-term in Australia, and the salient links that may exist between their migration and well-being. Therefore, this paper will discuss the *Pasifika* diaspora who are based in Auckland and Brisbane that have migrated over time from their Pacific homelands. The historical and geographical contexts of the Samoan and Tongan groups that form the focus of this study will provide important background information necessary for understanding *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migration. Further to this, there are political and economic factors that influence the decision-making processes related to migration and *Pasifika* well-being and their pursuit of improved well-being in Auckland and Brisbane.

Keywords: Auckland; Brisbane; *Pasifika* diaspora; Samoa; Tonga; Trans-Tasman migration

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‘Everywhere they go, to Australia, New Zealand...and elsewhere, they strike roots in new resource areas, securing employment and overseas family property, expanding kinship networks through which they circulate themselves, their relatives, their material good, and their stories all across their ocean, and the ocean is theirs because it has always been their home....The resources of Samoans...and Tongans, are no longer confined to their national boundaries. They are located wherever these people are living, permanently or otherwise...’

Hau‘ofa (1993, pp.155-156)

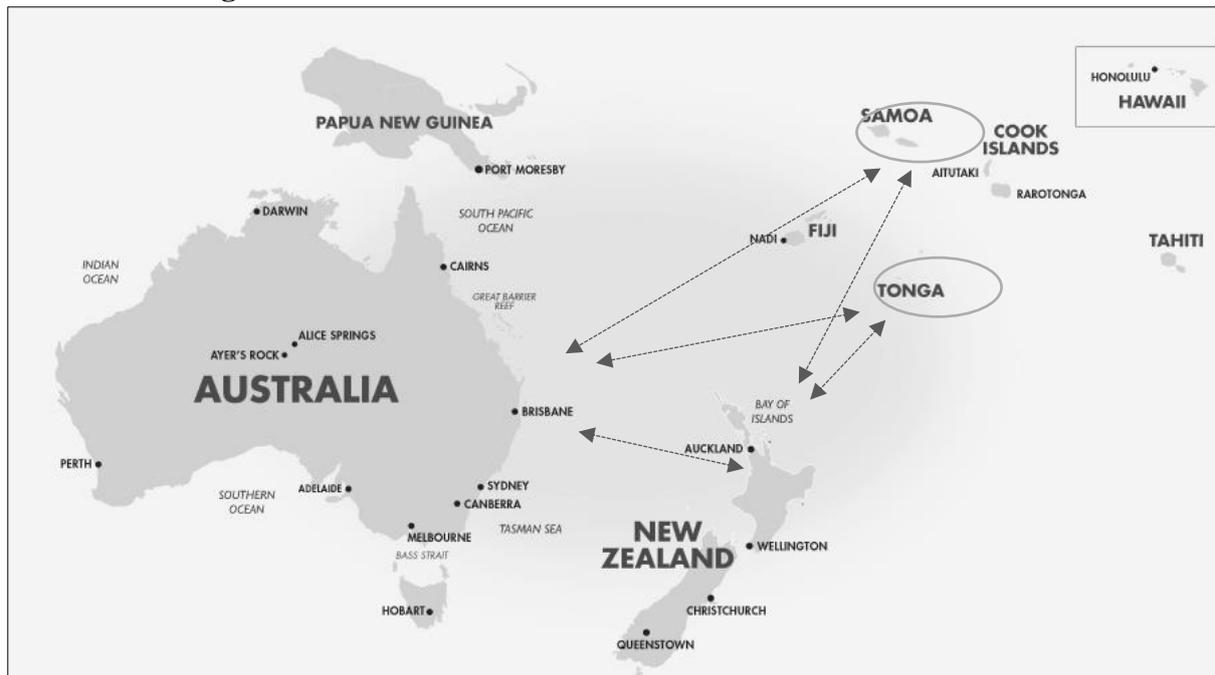
Introduction

The following discussion aims to provide an overview of the *Pasifika* diaspora now residing in Australia or New Zealand, with a specific focus on the Trans-Tasman migration of *Pasifika* Samoan and Tongan groups between Auckland and Brisbane. This paper will provide an overview of nine aspects pertinent to the research focus on *Pasifika* diaspora residing in Auckland and Brisbane: (1) the term *Pasifika*, (2) Samoans, (3) Tongans, (4) *Pasifika* movement away from homelands, (5) *Pasifika* in New Zealand, (6) *Pasifika* in Australia, (7) *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migration, (8) Regulated inequalities for *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrants, and (9) Reasons for *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migration.

Pasifika

The *Pasifika* diaspora are dispersed populations originating from the Pacific Islands and now living in significant collective proportions within Australia, New Zealand and the United States (Ka‘ili, 2017, pp.21, 52-53,94; Scull, 2004, pp. 53-56) . In particular, this study is focused on the *Pasifika* migrants who are from the island nations of Samoa and Tonga, now residing in Australia and/or New Zealand (see Map 1). According to Mila-Schaaf (2010, p.22-23), the word ‘*Pasifika*’ is the transliteration of the word Pacific which has developed in a localised Aotearoa context, coined by New Zealand-born Pacific Islanders. *Pasifika* is a pan-Pacific Islander identity shared and used by community groups from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Hawai‘i, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and Tuvalu (McGavin, 2014, pp.128, 134).

Map 1:
Samoan and Tongan *Pasifika* diaspora movements between Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga



Source: Goway Travel (adapted by author¹)

Thus, the collective term *Pasifika* used in the statistics presented in this paper, refers to migrant peoples belonging to Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian ancestry groups living in Australia and New Zealand; these groups are considered separately from the indigenous peoples of Australia and New Zealand² as categorised by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and Statistics New Zealand (StatsNZ) census data. More specific to this study, the term *Pasifika* refers collectively to the Samoan and Tongan groups, that the study focuses on, who collectively use this term *Pasifika* as a shared identity within the context of Auckland and Brisbane. Although this study mostly considers the Samoan and Tongan *Pasifika* groups simultaneously when referring to them as a collective, it will be important to note that these two groups are not from the same Pacific islands. Samoan and Tongan people originate from two separate Pacific Island groups (see Map 1).

Samoans

Samoans originate from the islands of Samoa, which are an archipelago in the central South Pacific, forming part of Polynesia and the wider Oceanic region. The archipelago includes all

¹ Adapted map with inclusion of shapes to show movements of Samoan and Tongan *Pasifika* diaspora between Australia, New Zealand, Samoa and Tonga. Source: Goway Travel, retrieved 30/10/2018 from <https://www.goway.com/trips/des/Australia-and-south-pacific/>

² The Australian and New Zealand census data records provides subcategories of Oceanic peoples based on ethnicity and ancestry.

of Samoa and most of American Samoa (see Map 2).

Map 2: Samoa Islands



Source: The Australian National University³

As recorded by So‘o (2008), in 1899 a convention was signed placing the eastern group of the archipelago under the United States and the Western Islands of Samoa under German control (p.44). At the onset of World War I, the Western Islands were later given to New Zealand to administrate (p.45) until Samoa gained independence in 1962 (pp.47, 71; Brown, Leeves, & Prayaga, 2012, pp.2-3).

The Samoa 2006 Census⁴ had recorded the population of Samoa Islands over 179 thousand. More recently, the 2018 United Nations estimate recorded an increase in the population of Samoa with over 197 thousand. Of this current total population residing in Samoa, more than 92 per cent are of full Samoan descent, about seven per cent are Euro-nesian (mixed European and Polynesian ancestry) and the remaining percentage is classified as European. Over 75 per cent of Samoans living in Samoa associate their belief systems with a Christ-based

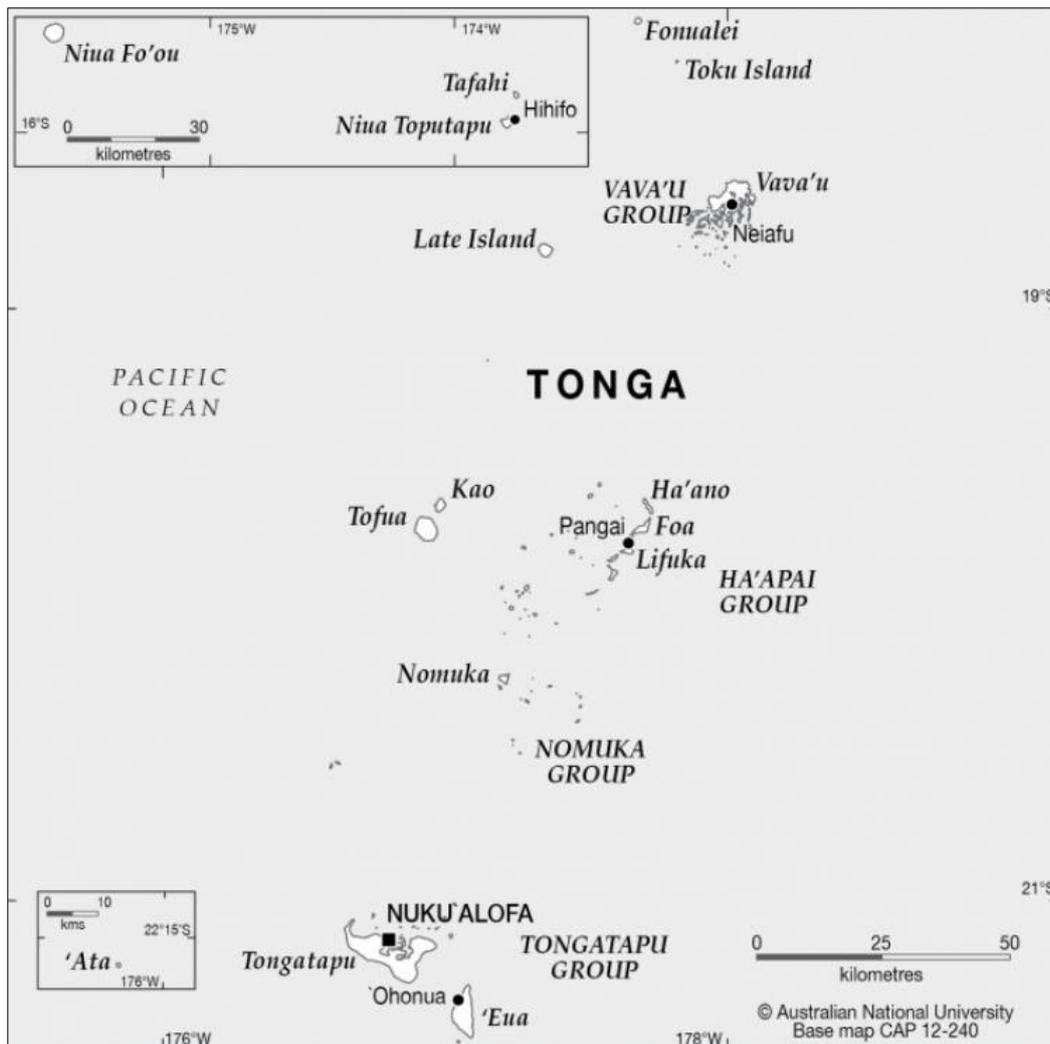
³ ‘Samoa Islands’ map source: CartoGIS Services, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University, retrieved 31/10/2018 from: <https://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/maponline/base-maps/samoa-american-samoa#>

⁴ Samoa Census, Population, 2018.

faith (Christian) and the majority of these are regular attendees at a place of worship.

Like Samoans, the majority of Tongans living in Tonga Islands attend church on a weekly basis and this social norm is evident with the closure of stores and main businesses on a Sunday. Tonga has been described as a ‘strongly Christian nation’ and is evidence of the strong missionary influence on its social and political systems since the 19th century (McGrath, 2004, p.981). Tongan people originate from the Kingdom of Tonga, also an archipelago, that is situated south of the islands of Samoa in closer proximity to New Zealand (see Map 3).

Map 3: Tonga Islands



Source: The Australian National University⁵

⁵ 'Tonga Islands' map source: CartoGIS Services, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University, retrieved 31/10/2018 from: <http://asiapacific.anu.edu.au/maponline/base-maps/tonga-base>

Tongans

Tonga became a constitutional monarchy in 1875, a British protectorate in 1900 and later gained its independence in 1970. The Tonga 2006 Census⁶ recorded the population of Tonga at 103 thousand. More recently, the 2018 United Nations estimate⁷ recorded the population of Tonga just over 109 thousand. Of this total, more than 98 per cent are of full Tongan descent, with the remaining 2 per cent of European, Chinese and other Pacific Islander descent (Tonga Census, Population, 2018). According to Brown, *et.al.* (2012), ‘there are an estimated 125 thousand ethnic Tongans living abroad, of which 50 thousand are in New Zealand⁸’ (p.3).

***Pasifika* movement away from homelands**

Hau‘ofa (1993) correctly described the contemporary migration of Oceanians, people of the Pacific Ocean, particularly away from traditional homelands to newfound homelands as an expected proclivity:

Human nature demands space for free movement, and the larger the space the better it is for people. Islanders have broken out of their confinement, are moving around and away from their homelands, not so much because their countries are poor, but because they were unnaturally confined and severed from many of their traditional sources of wealth, and because it is in their blood to be mobile. They are once again enlarging their world, establishing new resource bases and expanded networks for circulation (p.156).

In fact, the migratory pattern of movement of *Pasifika* people, in search of better opportunities and resources is a natural inclination that has been happening for centuries (Keck & Schieder, 2015). The phenomena of *Pasifika* mass migration, 1950s-1990s, from the Pacific Islands directly to Pacific Rim countries like New Zealand, Australia and the United States mainland has been well-documented (Ahlburg & Brown, 1998; Bedford, 2007; Brown, 1998; Brown & Walker, 1995; Lee, 2004; Ravulo, 2015; Va‘a, 2001), and the contemporary interaction of New Zealanders⁹ with Indigenous Australia has also been considered by various studies (George, 2014; Hamer, 2009; Henare-Solomona, 2012). The more recent occurrences seen in the 1990s onwards, of *Pasifika* migrating across the Tasman Sea from New Zealand to Australia, is a

⁶ Tonga Department of Statistics, cited in Tongan Census, Population 2018, para.2.

⁷ UN estimate dated July 1, 2018, cited in Tonga Census, Population 2018, para.10.

⁸ Figures relate to 2011 statistics sourced from Asian Development Bank, cited in Brown *et.al.* (2012, p.2).

⁹ ‘New Zealanders’ has been used within this context to mean either Maori New Zealanders, or Pacific Islanders coming to Australia from New Zealand. For many Pacific Islanders who were born in New Zealand, or who have become New Zealand citizens during the process of their residency in New Zealand, their nationality is ‘New Zealand’ on their New Zealand passports. In the context of this sentence, the researcher acknowledges that research undertaken by George (2014), Hamer (2009) and Henare-Solomona (2012), considers the movements of both Maori and Pacific Islanders from New Zealand, as New Zealanders, in Australia.

continuation of the journey taken by *Pasifika* that began with their initial movements from the Pacific Islands to New Zealand (Bedford, 2007; Bedford, 2009; Vause, 2010). Besides this in-built *Pasifika* desire to explore and to migrate, Pacific-rim countries like New Zealand and Australia beckon those *Pasifika* in search of opportunities. For instance, the aging demographic structure of Australia¹⁰ leaves the country encouraging an increase in the migration of working sector age groups to sustain the economic needs of the country. This demographic need in association with the broadening of Australia's immigration policies since the mid-1970s has led to new groups of migrants arriving from all parts of the world, including *Pasifika*.

Apparently, there are more Samoans and Tongans living abroad than there are living in Samoa (McGarvey & Seiden, 2010 pp.214-215) and Tonga. According to Besnier (2011), the most common destinations for Tongans migrating overseas are 'urban centres of New Zealand...Australia, and...the United States.' (p.36). Likewise, Lilomaiava-Doktor (2009), claims an 'expanded territorial distribution' of Samoans into the Pacific 'rim countries of the United States, New Zealand, Australia' (p.10). According to Brown, *et.al.*(2012), 'there are around 300 thousand ethnic Samoans living abroad...most of these live in New Zealand' (p.3).

For many *Pasifika*, New Zealand is a stepping stone to Australia. Several studies prove this fact (Brown, *et.al.*, 2012; Lee, 2003; Va'a, 2001). Two decades ago, Va'a (2001), carried out a study of 735 Samoans in New South Wales (NSW), Australia¹¹. Va'a (2001), found that almost 70 per cent of the Samoans in his study had lived in New Zealand before migrating to Australia (p.83). Of the sample of 735 people in the NSW-based study, 'practically all Samoan who migrated to Australia were New Zealand citizens' (Va'a, 2001 p.81). A decade later, Brown, *et.al.* (2012), carried out a survey of *Pasifika* migrants living in NSW¹². In their sample, more than 60 per cent of the Samoan migrants and almost 40 per cent of the Tongan migrants had 'migrated to Australia as step-migrants from New Zealand' (p.3). For Tongan migrants, 'Australia is generally preferred over New Zealand, primarily because of the perception that it offers more opportunities' compared to the 'economic downturn in New Zealand' (Lee, 2003 pp.24-26).

Diaspora theory suggests when migrants leave their homelands, they become uprooted from their culture and disconnected from their people. According to Guo (2016), migration has been viewed as 'traumatic' for victimised diaspora groups, 'including the Africans, Americans,

¹⁰ Ageing population structures in New Zealand and Australia have resulted from 'below replacement' levels of fertility, declining mortality and increasing life expectancy. Such structures affect economic progress in these countries causing a reliance on nations with younger population structures, including Pacific Island nations.

¹¹ NSW Samoan study conducted during 1992 and 1993.

¹² NSW Samoan, Tongan, Cook Islander study conducted during 2010 and 2011.

Irish and Palestinians’ (pp.153-154) and marginalised groups dealing with crisis (Perez, 2002). With regards to *Pasifika* migrants, there are two schools of thought on whether or not their social and cultural experiences within diaspora contexts continue to connect to their homelands. On the one hand, diaspora studies focus on the challenges *Pasifika* face when caught between two different worlds (Gershon, 2012; Lee, 2003; Mila-Schaaf, 2010; Va‘a, 2001). While on the other hand, *Pasifika* academics advocate that migrants remain culturally whole and socially connected despite the distance travelled (Hau‘ofa, 2008; Lilomaiava-Doktor, 2009). Gershon (2007), elaborates on the significant *Pasifika* family webs that interconnect people in island homelands and diasporas allowing for the continued exchange and circulation of cultural knowledge and resources (pp.474-475). Furthermore, Lilomaiava-Doktor (2009), concludes in her study of Samoan migration that ‘distance does not separate ‘*āiga*,¹³ but only provides further interconnecting social pathways...because social connections constitute a significant part of people’s identity and self-esteem. It is...social connections, rather than geographic boundaries that are central to Samoan conceptions of movement’ (p.22). Similarly, Ka‘ili (2017), suggests that the migration of Tongan people away from their island homeland is both a familial and communal process (pp.79-80).

***Pasifika* in New Zealand**

The *Pasifika* peoples of New Zealand have mostly migrated from the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Samoa, Tonga, and Fiji. In 1974 New Zealand’s immigration policy affirmed the citizenship of people from the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau (Beaglehole, 2015, p.6) granting them unrestricted access to New Zealand. As the territory of Western Samoa was once administered by New Zealand, their people were given special consideration when applying for visas, permanent residency and citizenship. Since the 1960s various immigration quotas admitted people from the Pacific, including Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu as well as Pitcairn Islanders to live and work in New Zealand. Many of these *Pasifika* were expected to return to their homelands once their work contracts ended. According to Beaglehole (2015), several *Pasifika* continued to stay in New Zealand even if it meant illegally overstaying beyond the expiry of a work permit or visitor’s visa (p.6). According to StatsNZ and the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs (MPIA), the *Pasifika* population in New Zealand has increased from ‘a small immigrant community’ to a ‘rapidly growing’ urban population, ‘from just 2,200 people to 266,600 between 1945 and 2006’¹⁴(2010, p.8). In 2006, Samoans were the largest *Pasifika*

¹³ *Āiga* is the Samoan term used for kin or family that includes nuclear and extended families

¹⁴ These figures were based on the 2006 Census in New Zealand.

group in New Zealand, while Tongans were the ‘fastest-growing’ *Pasifika* group in New Zealand ‘with their numbers increasing more than threefold between 1986 and 2006’ (StatsNZ & MPIA, 2010, p.8). The most recent census figures¹⁵ record a total of 295,941 *Pasifika* living in New Zealand. Table 1 shows this growth of the Samoan, Tongan and overall *Pasifika* population within Auckland and New Zealand as a whole.

More than 65 per cent of New Zealand’s *Pasifika* are living in Auckland (Auckland Council, 2015, p.3). There are *Pasifika* people living in all parts of Auckland. However, the *Pasifika* population of Auckland is distributed in ‘high concentrations in the south and western parts of Auckland’ (Auckland Council, 2015, p.5). At present, the two largest *Pasifika* groups in Auckland are the Samoan and Tongan groups. Almost half of Auckland’s *Pasifika* identify as being Samoan (over 95,000 people). A quarter of Auckland’s *Pasifika* identify as being Tongan (over 46,000 people). The next three largest groups were Cook Islands Maori, Niuean and Fijian (Auckland Council, 2015, p.8). The specific movement of *Pasifika* migrants between New Zealand and Australia is a part of a greater Trans-Tasman migration flow that is discussed in depth by several studies (Green, Power & Jang, 2008; Poot, 2010).

Table 1¹⁶: Samoan, Tongan & *Pasifika* in Auckland, New Zealand 2001-2013

	Auckland				New Zealand			
	2001 <i>n</i>	2006 <i>n</i>	2013 <i>n</i>	Growth 2001-2013	2001 <i>n</i>	2006 <i>n</i>	2013 <i>n</i>	Growth 2001-2013
Samoan	76,581	87,837	95,916	2.10%	115,017	131,103	144,138	2.11%
Tongan	32,538	40,140	46,971	3.70%	40,719	50,478	60,336	4.01%
<i>Pasifika</i> ¹⁷	154,680	177,948	194,958	2.17%	231,798	265,974	295,941	2.31%

***Pasifika* in Australia**

¹⁵ Recent figures available from the 2013 Census in New Zealand.

¹⁶ Figures sourced from Statistics New Zealand, retrieved 28/1/2019

http://nzdotstat.stats.govt.nz/wbos/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLECODE8021&_ga=2.202628505.901319176.1548640340-1743282063.1540698474#

¹⁷ *Pasifika* figures include all Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian ethnic/ancestry groups excluding tangata whenua/indigenous of Australia and New Zealand. Both Australian and New Zealand census data consider Maori and Aboriginal peoples separately to migrant *Pasifika* groups living in Australia and New Zealand.

Despite an influx of *Pasifika* people both directly from the Pacific homelands, and via New Zealand, into Australia, *Pasifika* communities in Australia have been described as ‘statistically invisible’ (Queensland Health, 2014, pg.1). One reason for this invisibility is that the many *Pasifika* who have migrated to Australia through New Zealand have been categorised in the Census data as ‘New Zealanders.’ Queensland Health (2014), suggests that people may be ticking ‘other’ and not their country of birth or ancestry on the census forms (p.1). A likely reason for people not providing the correct information, and explanations for *Pasifika* statistical invisibility, is the avoidance of *Pasifika* being tracked by authorities, for immigration purposes. Besnier (2011), cites the findings of Lee (2003), who supports this notion that migrants remain ‘undocumented’ by ‘avoiding’ authorities from immigration and census departments (Lee, 2003, pp.19-21 cited in Besnier, 2011, p.43). Therefore, the recorded number of *Pasifika* living in Australia may be significantly higher than what has been recorded.

According to Ravulo (2015), Samoan and Tongan *Pasifika* residing in Australia were in the top five Pacific ancestry groups and most of the Samoan and Tongan *Pasifika* communities are concentrated along the Eastern coast of Australia, with the highest concentration of *Pasifika* in Queensland, followed by New South Wales and then Victoria (ABS, 2011, cited in Ravulo, 2015, p.4). Batley (2017), has analysed the more recently released 2016 census, in comparison with data from the 2006 and 2011 censuses. His analysis concludes that the proportion of people in Australia claiming Pacific ancestry (including Micronesian, Melanesian and Papuan, and Polynesian, excluding Maori) is ‘growing strongly both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total population’ (Batley, 2017, p.1). It should be noted here that Ravulo (2015), has included Maori (New Zealand Peoples) whereas Batley (2017), does not. Table 2 shows the growth of the Samoan, Tongan and overall *Pasifika* population within Brisbane and Australia as a whole.

The *Pasifika* population in Australia ‘have a long association with Australia as part of its identification within the Oceania region’ (Ravulo, 2015, p.4). For instance, during the early 20th century, a small number of Samoans migrated to Australia for ‘commerce, education and missionary purposes’ and later during the 1970s, ‘educational programs sponsored by the Australian Government resulted in increased numbers of Samoa-born people migrating to Australia’ (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2006,¹⁸ cited in Queensland Health Multicultural Services, 2011, p.1). As mentioned earlier, several Samoa-born and New Zealand-born Samoans migrated from New Zealand to Australia for work and study (Brown,

¹⁸ Department of Immigration and Citizenship. Settlement reporting database. Retrieved 7/12/2018. <http://www.immi.gov.au/settlement> (cited by Queensland Health Multicultural Services, 2011, p.1).

et.al., 2012; Tiumalu, 2009¹⁹ cited in Queensland Health Multicultural Services, 2011, pp.1-2). The Department of Immigration and Citizenship (2017), records that the contemporary migration of Tongans to Australia has a ‘strong pattern of family migration’ beginning in the 1970s when Tongans came to ‘study, work or join family members, maintaining strong kinship ties’ (p.1). By the mid-1970s the New Zealand contract-worker scheme, that had encouraged many Tongan labourers to migrate to urban centres like Auckland, ended. This event in New Zealand spurred many Tongans to travel across the Tasman and settle in Australia (Brown, *et.al.*, 2012), while other Tongans migrated directly to Australia from Tonga, further encouraging other family members to settle in Australia (Brown, *et.al.*, 2012; Department of Immigration and Citizenship, 2017).

***Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migration**

Pasifika migration across the Tasman Sea from New Zealand to Australia, and particularly to Brisbane, is part of a general Trans-Tasman migration flow of New Zealanders. There has been a consistent increase in this Trans-Tasman flow since the late 1960s due mainly to the countries’ proximity, as well as cultural connections (Green, *et.al.*, 2008; Poot, 2010; Pryke, 2014). *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migration is also often facilitated by the preferential migration access accorded to New Zealanders under Australia’s migration policy; this is particularly so for those *Pasifika* who are born in New Zealand and thus have New Zealand citizenship or permanent residency rights, or who otherwise obtain these rights because of New Zealand’s own visa and citizenship regimes which accord rights to people from many Pacific Island nations on the basis of New Zealand’s own colonial history in the region (something, incidentally, that Australia does not do). Green et al. (2008), explain that New Zealanders sometimes become permanent migrants ‘by default’ when they continue living in Australia after a temporary move (p.35). This is often the case for New Zealand-born *Pasifika*, or *Pasifika* who have obtained New Zealand citizenship, who often become permanent migrants after travelling to Australia to visit family.

¹⁹ Diversicare: Tiumalu F SM. Samoans in Queensland. Unpublished data. Diversicare: Townsville; 2009 (cited by Queensland Health Multicultural Services, 2011, pp.1-2).

Table 2²⁰: Samoan, Tongan & Pasifika in Brisbane, Australia 2006-2016

	Brisbane				Australia			
	2006 <i>n</i>	2011 <i>n</i>	2016 <i>n</i>	Growth 2006- 2016	2006 <i>n</i>	2011 <i>n</i>	2016 <i>n</i>	Growth 2006- 2016
Samoan	11,287	17,333	22,623	10.04%	39,997	55,837	75,753	8.94%
Tongan	2,389	3,732	5,126	11.46%	18,426	25,096	32,695	7.74%
<i>Pasifika</i> ²¹	25,961	37,767	50,632	9.50%	112,140	150,066	206,674	8.43%

Since the mid-1990s, the number of New Zealand-born *Pasifika* arriving in Australia has exceeded the arrival numbers of *Pasifika* born in the Pacific Islands (Green, *et.al.*, 2008). Hamer (2014), reported on the Australian census figures available for 2011, that New Zealand-born Samoans outnumbered those born in Samoa for each year of arrival since 1995 (p.113). Similarly, New Zealand-born Tongans outnumbered those born in Tonga (Hamer, 2014, p.113). Current census figures reveal that the number of *Pasifika* living in Queensland has surged from just under 39,000 in 2011 to more than 70,000²² in 2016. There is a concentration of Queensland *Pasifika* living in Brisbane (see Table 2), particularly south of Brisbane. According to Batley (2017), ‘the highest numbers are recorded in the Ipswich-Logan-Gold Coast-Beaudesert area of south of Brisbane’ (p.2).

Brisbane has become, as a New Zealand documentary series (*Tagata Pasifika*, 2015), described it, the new ‘land of milk and honey’ for New Zealand *Pasifika* seeking improved lifestyles. Indeed, since the 1960s migration flows between Australia and New Zealand have moved strongly in Australia’s favour, with relative economic conditions between the two countries being the main cause of high net migration loss to Australia (Haig, 2010). There has also been a broadening of Australia’s immigration policies since the mid-1970s that allowed for new groups of migrants arriving from all parts of the world to enter Australia. However, the usual migration procedures that other migrants must comply with do not always apply to New Zealand citizens under the Trans-Tasman agreement that exists between the two nations. This

²⁰ Figures sourced from the Australian Bureau of Statistics. Retrieved 28/1/2019.

<https://auth.censusdata.abs.gov.au/webapi/jsf/tableView/openTable.xhtml>

²¹ *Pasifika* figures include all Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian ethnic/ancestry groups excluding tangata whenua/indigenous of Australia and New Zealand. Both Australian and New Zealand census data consider Maori and Aboriginal peoples separately to migrant *Pasifika* groups living in Australia and New Zealand.

²² ABS census figures for Queensland show a recent surge in numbers of *Pasifika* living in the state (2006: 36,092; 2011: 38,651; 2016: 70,289).

freedom of entry in conjunction with the proximity between New Zealand and Australia as well as the strong pull of employment opportunities encourages New Zealand-born *Pasifika* and *Pasifika* with New Zealand citizenship to live and work in Australia. Although the increase of *Pasifika* arriving in Australia has been recorded as a migration trend occurring since the 1990s, this contemporary Trans-Tasman migration by *Pasifika* forms part of a centuries-old tradition of *Pasifika* people migrating away from their Pacific homelands, in search of new opportunities and resources (Banivanua Mar, 2015; Hau'ofa, 1993; Keck & Schieder, 2015; Mallon, Māhina-Tuai, & Salesa, 2012; Va'a, 2001).

Regulated inequalities for *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrants

Since the 1920s, the Australian and New Zealand governments have had arrangements in place that have allowed their citizens ease of movement between the two countries; Australian and New Zealand citizens are allowed to migrate between Australia and New Zealand without the need to obtain visas, and have the ability to live and work within these two countries without qualifying on skills-based or humanitarian grounds (Green, *et.al.*, 2008). The 1973 Trans-Tasman Travel Arrangement formalised this long-standing understanding (Walrond, 2014). As a result of this Trans-Tasman agreement an estimated 640,770 New Zealand citizens were present in Australia by 2013 with work and residence rights (Department of Immigration and Border Protection, 2017).

The significance of this for *Pasifika* is that the preferential migration arrangements that New Zealand has with many Polynesian countries (including Samoa and Tonga) means that *Pasifika* with New Zealand citizenship can access Australian residence and work opportunities by virtue of these Trans-Tasman arrangements. A consequence of this is a much higher rate of migration to Australia (and Australian labour market participation) by Polynesian people as contrasted to Melanesians entering the country via New Zealand. This implication of the Trans-Tasman arrangement has been discussed by Mackay and Guinness (2019), in relation to the Fijian migrants who have experienced more difficulty in obtaining residency in either Australia or New Zealand. Since 1994, however, policy changes announced by the Australian government have meant residency status changes and decreased benefits for these migrants, including *Pasifika*, arriving from New Zealand. As of the 1st of September 1994, all non-citizens in Australia were expected to hold a visa to remain in the country. The Special Category Visa (SCV) was introduced for New Zealand citizens as a temporary visa; the benefit of this SCV is that it was automatically issued upon arrival in Australia. However, the SCV has also been used to control the benefits and opportunities received by New Zealand citizens in

Australia such as social welfare assistance, medical benefits and tertiary fees support. The policy changes affecting the labour mobility of Trans-Tasman *Pasifika* migrants, since the 1990s, reveal the ambivalent role that government visa schemes and social welfare policies play in controlling the level of access to socio-economic benefits.²³ As discussed by Mackay and Guinness (2019), Australia has gradually withdrawn benefits and rights to New Zealand citizens. This ultimately creates an un-level playing field of challenging social and economic circumstances that contemporary *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrants find themselves in on arrival to Brisbane. The recent changes to Centrelink access have created socioeconomic differences across the community with benefits changing over time and affecting people's circumstances across several generations.

In 2001 the Australian government introduced changes to the Social Security Act 1991. A New Zealand citizen arriving for the first time in Australia, after the 26th of February 2001, was classified as a non-protected SCV holder and was required to apply for an Australian permanent visa to access particular social security assistance. In short, this meant that a New Zealander can enter Australia to settle and work, with a SCV, but they do not have any benefits or rights as Australian citizens or permanent residents. For example, New Zealand citizens, on turning 18 years old or after leaving high school, although considered 'domestic' fee paying students on enrolment to an Australian tertiary institute, are required to pay their full fees upfront at the beginning of each semester. They have no access to Study Assist for a student loan or student allowance and do not qualify for an Australian scholarship if they have not completed their final year of high school in Australia. The significance of this policy for *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrants wanting a tertiary qualification is the inevitable choice to be made between returning to New Zealand for a student loan-supported degree and entering the Australian workforce as an unskilled or untrained worker.

Reasons for *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migration

Although there is a wealth of literature outlining the political and economic views behind the Trans-Tasman movement of *Pasifika*. Haig (2010), provides an economic focused report of the New Zealand diaspora (including *Pasifika*) working across the 'ditch' in Australia since the 1970s. Bedford (2004), and Ho, Hugo and Bedford (2003), have carried out quantitative work based on the movements of New Zealanders (including *Pasifika*) to Australia before and after Australia's social security policy introduced in 2001. Hamer (2014), examines the history of

²³ Note: Some Australian government policies (e.g. 2017 changes to Centrelink children's education bonuses) affect both New Zealand citizens and Australian citizens alike.

policy changes, previously discussed, in both New Zealand and Australia towards the *Pasifika* people and the challenges placed on their migratory movements across the Tasman. These changes in policy are linked to the public and media concern for the increased immigration of *Pasifika* (Bedford 2004). Bedford (2009), emphasises the negative stereotyping of *Pasifika* migrants in New Zealand contexts, with the usual focus on social and economic disparity (pp.37-39); Ravulo (2015), equally acknowledges that previous research on *Pasifika* in Australian contexts is often limited to a focus on *Pasifika* over-representation in antisocial behaviour and crime (p.5).

A few studies capture evidence of *Pasifika* entering Australia through New Zealand (1980s) as well as the mass numbers of *Pasifika* migrants residing in Australia (1990s onwards) however these rarely consider the sociocultural aspects of *Pasifika* economic behaviour. Va'a (2001), is one of the first Australian-based Trans-Tasman studies attempting to provide a broader perspective of the socio-economic aspects influencing *Pasifika* migrant life in Australia. Surveys have been carried out in New South Wales since the 1990s considering the economic behaviour of Tongan and Samoan households, including the remittance of goods and money to their Pacific Island nations of Tonga and Samoa. Overall, the literature continues to analyse *Pasifika* without considering their underlying reasons for their economic behaviour or their perspectives on the Trans-Tasman migration from New Zealand to Australia. According to Hamer (2014), there is an evident 'silence' in the literature that considers the *Pasifika* diasporic communities in both New Zealand and Australia, specifically that the 'voices' and the 'perspectives of Pacific people who have migrated to Australia from New Zealand themselves' has yet to be captured and documented in the literature (p.94).

Although current Trans-Tasman migration literature alludes to some reasons for this migration trend; Trans-Tasman literature fails to capture the perspectives and experiences of the *Pasifika* migrants themselves and how their movements relate to their well-being goals. Therefore, understanding *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrant perceptions and experiences of well-being in Auckland, New Zealand compared to their perceptions and experiences of well-being in Brisbane, Australia is important. There are over 70,000 *Pasifika* in Queensland²⁴, Australia with the majority living in Brisbane and these numbers are being added to through the process of Trans-Tasman migration. With the steady increase of the *Pasifika* population in Brisbane, it is the hope of this research that having a better understanding of *Pasifika* migrant perceptions and experiences of well-being -- in the context of their movements between Auckland and

²⁴ When we include Maori (New Zealand Peoples) in the count, there are over 102,000 Pacific peoples living in Queensland.

Brisbane - will help to inform government policies in the area of immigration, health, housing and education that are currently affecting the well-being of *Pasifika* Trans-Tasman migrants. A better understanding of *Pasifika* well-being perceptions and migration experiences will also provide valuable information on the behaviours of *Pasifika* migrants in Australia that may be influenced by these perceptions and experiences. For instance, the underlying reasons for their spatial distribution in certain urban areas, the underlying motives for economic participation in certain sectors of the labour market, and the underlying notions that drive their economic activities.

Conclusion

This paper has given an overview of literature that has informed an ongoing study of *Pasifika* well-being (of Tongan and Samoan diaspora communities). This paper provides current background information and a cross-section of cultural knowledge that both stems from deeply-rooted traditional Pacific homelands (Samoa and Tonga) to the more contemporary *Pasifika* diaspora contexts (Australia and New Zealand). These literature components are vital for understanding *Pasifika* perspectives and experiences within the Trans-Tasman migrant contexts of Auckland and Brisbane that the PhD study focuses on. This paper also highlights gaps in the literature that will be addressed in the thesis, due for completion in 2019.

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