



Core Pacific Collective Response Update February 2022

The Core Pacific Collective stakeholders received ongoing requests for connections and Covid-19 supports in July 2021 from government agencies, community organisations and Pacific community members.

To support Pacific COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts, the Core Pacific Collective (CPC) was established in July 2021 and has been fully operational since then.

The CPC comprise of:

- Chair, NSW Council for Pacific Communities
- Chair, Pacific Women's Professional Business Network Inc
- Chair, Pacific Islands Mt Druitt Action Network
- Chair, Core Pacific Mental Health Group
- Chair, Social Work and Policy Studies, The University Sydney

An equal partnership, the responsibilities divided as following:

- NSW CPC leads in Government discussions and coordinates support for the Southwest Sydney area
- PWPBN INC develops and manage the CPC Strategic plan and high-level responses, coordinate the *Nurturing Vā*, the Backyard social media and the NSW Pacific Link Mat
- PIMDAN coordinates the local Pacific Vaccination hubs in Western Sydney, represents CPC on Western Sydney meetings and responds to the Pacific community needs in the Western Sydney Region
- Chair, Social Work and Policy Studies, The University Sydney represents CPC on media and develops media/ research articles, as well facilitates the *Nurturing Vā*
- Core Pacific Mental Health Group oversees CPC

Pacific Communities situation overview

In June-July, the CPC stakeholders each received requests for connection to Pacific community leaders, noting that the Pacific community was at high risk of contracting Covid-19 and not adhering to the Covid-19 rules. NSW is now at 80% 2 dose vaccinated.

The CPC was activated on 29 July 2021, and we collated the issues from the community, church leaders and Pacific community members engaging with diverse Pacific communities.

From August – November, CPC has received requests and provided close to 12,000 supports including booking of vaccinations, support on the day of vaccination, refer for case management and financial supports, food and medical relief, Covid-19 support and post support, refer for accommodation, cultural supports, case management, information share and interpretation.

PRIORITIES Identified

- Fears, anxiety & frustration – not to vaccinate or how to make appointment or where to go and get information on side effects
- Anti-vaccination as a result of misinformation
- Clarity and understanding the information (contradictory information/ messages, cultural & language barriers) - Clarity around Covid rules in the Languages)
- Pacific Vaccination Hubs (Not understanding the importance or where to go, Pacific specific vaccination hubs engage better, and volunteers can support)
- Mental Health – Pacific Youth (Isolation/ family and domestic violence/ recreation)
- Learning Support for children and young people
- Lack of awareness of supports - Food Relief, Medical and Financial support
- Covid Plan/ Kit, information easy to read in the one place, where to go for help and what to do when you contract COVID-19 – what to do and where to call- Case management support

Pacific COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Overview

Key achievements:

December- February 2022

- Support and referrals - CPC continues to receive requests and provided close to 2000 supports including booking of vaccinations, support on the day of vaccination, refer for case management and financial supports, food and medical relief, Covid-19 support and post support, refer for accommodation, cultural supports, case management, information share and interpretation.
- Advocate for Home Affairs to include Tongan and Fijian translations
- COVID19 Fitness Videos with Highlights from the COVID19 HOPE Toolkit produced by Crunch Fitness
- Final Draft of the Pacific Toolkit for COVID-19 H.O.P.E Help Options for Preparedness in Emergency Funded by Multicultural NSW
- Final Drafts of the Pacific Toolkit for COVID-19 H.O.P.E Help Options for Preparedness in Emergency Funded by Multicultural NSW translated in Samoan, Fiji Hindi and Cook Island. (Tonga, Fijian and Niue TBA)
- Toolkit LAUNCH 1st Feb 2022
- Official introduction of the NSW Pacific Links 1st Feb 2022
- Nurturing Va resumes with - COVID19 Smart Return to School Feb 2022

October- November 2021

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- Pacific Toolkit for COVID-19 H.O.P.E Help Options for Preparedness in Emergency
Funded by Multicultural NSW
Led by Dr Jan Fizzell, NSW Health

In Final Draft with one set of amendments in late January

Translations underway

Scheduled for Launch February 10th

Roll our Launch in Bitesize commenced 9th December Q&A with Dr Jan Fizzell on Life with Covid19 – the first segment of the toolkit

- Nurturing Vā continues with experts such as Dr Christine Lau on caring for Children with COVID19, Iqbal Akhtar, Dawson Grace and Selena Afeaki on Wellbeing & Mental health
 - *Nurturing Vā* Christmas Celebration 16th December
- EOI completed. NSW Pacific Links, successful candidates will be inaugurated at the Launch on February 10th, 2022
- NSW Pacific Links will commence in December in their support of the roll out of the Toolkit
- Backyard social media campaign
 - Diwali Celebrating safely video and image messages
 - Partnership with Multicultural Health Community Services for social media messages
- Partnership with Crunch Fitness for a Seniors Wellbeing accessible videos that will include the Toolkit information
- Partnership requests with Sydwest, Mission Australia and South West Multicultural Community Centre
- Core Pacific Collective Abstract has been accepted into a book on “Lived experience-led knowledge in social justice research”
- November 2021 - VACCINE PFIZER POP UP Vaccine Clinic
FIRST, SECOND and BOOSTER SHOTS available from 12 years up 😊
PLUMPTON Neighbourhood Centre Hall

- Media Articles
 - SMH (02/08/21): <https://www.smh.com.au/national/i-live-in-canterbury-bankstown-and-i-m-worried-about-my-pasifika-community-20210802-p58f44.html>
 - SKY (03/08/21): <https://www.skynews.com.au/opinion/chris-kenny/misinformation-a-key-reason-behind-vaccine-hesitancy/video/add18f47031fb65cb14b4cdb96622720>
 - SBS (11/08/21): <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/the-western-sydney-community-leaders-working-to-dispel-vaccine-myths>
 - SBS: (26/08/21): <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/sydney-s-pacific-islander-community-mourns-covid-19-death-of-30-year-old-mother>
 - Pacific Media Network
(31/08/21): <https://omny.fm/shows/pacificmedianetwork/professor-ijoji-ravulo-professor-of-social-work-an>
 - Bloomberg (28/10/21): <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2021-10-28/australia-covid-zero-approach-changes-as-borders-travel-opens-up>

August – October 2021

- Support and referrals - CPC has received requests and provided close to 10,000 supports including booking of vaccinations, support on the day of vaccination, refer for case management and financial supports, food and medical relief, Covid-19 support and post support, refer for accommodation, cultural supports, case management, information share.

- Preparing the Pacific Toolkit for COVID-19 H.O.P.E Help Options for Preparedness in
- Emergency focus on preparedness for key technical areas including planning, isolation and quarantine, infection prevention and control and resources. Translated into 5 languages
 - 2 reference groups have been established in the past week- Technical Expert Advisory and Community Reference Group to provide feedback.
- Mobilize additional vaccinations for Pacific Vaccination Hubs in Mt Druiitt and Campbelltown and continue to support the Guildford Hub.
- *Nurturing Vā* Covid-19 Community updates and Q& A with experts
- Backyard Social media Campaign and Partnership with Multicultural Health Communication Service
 - Backyard Social media Over 50 videos and image messages including a message from the Manu Samoa rugby team
 - Multicultural Health Communication Service video messages in Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Niuean, Fiji-Hindi including the Princess of Tonga
- Faith leaders Forums- Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Niuean – a few have chosen to hold a *Nurturing Vā* in their languages
- Pacific Links are specialists in local LGA's that will already have good connections to local services and key government agencies for community members to contact for support.
- Food relief
- Source young people 12-17 for Social media video messages
- Continuously engaging and communicating with the Pacific community on their needs and encouraging a sense of ownership through the communities holding their own information sessions and meetings then providing proposal on the key needs especially around language and translated material- ***Partnership with Linking Hearts, MWA in referral of TVH clients for supports***
- Continuously coordinating with government NGO partners, including daily CPC online briefs, weekly meetings, meet with partners, monthly update of CPC strategic plan and management of weekly *Nurturing Vā* Live sessions.

Current Issues Overview

Lack of resources

To date, the work above is being done on a voluntary basis. Several NGOs providing financial support and case management have requested cultural support from the CPC. A Pacific taskforce of Coordinator, case workers and support workers would be ideal, under the NSW Council for Pacific Communities. The need for the NSW CPC to have a funded team will enable better communication and implementation of an overarching framework to address the needs of Pacific communities.

Communication channels especially of sensitive information.

Better communication from government agencies, suggest a weekly briefing with NGOs and special meetings with those deemed to be a priority. For instance, received on October 8th *"We have received information from NSW Health indicating that members of the Pacific community who are testing positive to COVID are not receiving the necessary care that they need and are falling very ill and even dying in their homes"* and then requesting to meet after the weekend. To which one of the CPC stakeholders had to respond over the weekend suggesting a more appropriate approach for communication and addressing of these concerns.

Mental Health in the Pacific communities

As indicated above CPC responded to the fear and anxiety in the community by collaborating with government agencies through different strategies. CPC would like to expand on the Pacific Mental Health Initiative and the Pacific Mental Talanoa research, using the foundation they have already laid. However at this stage there is no dedicated funding to execute the plan expansion of this much needed targeted approach to mental health in the Pacific communities.

The Pacific Mental Health Talanoa report can be found here: <https://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-2949412205>

The videos are also available here:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCd6cEK9xSAHyjbhUtLCeMfw/videos>