

# **Managing Pasifika Diaspora in Australian Rugby League**

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## **Certificate of Original Authorship**

I, David Lakisa, declare that this thesis is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the UTS Business School at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution. This research is supported by the Australian Government Research Training Program.

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## Abbreviations

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AFL	Australian Football League
ARL	Australian Rugby League
ARLC	Australian Rugby League Commission
ARLIC	Australian Rugby League Indigenous Council
ARLPC	Australian Rugby League Pasifika Council
ARU	Australian Rugby Union
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
NFL	National Football League
NRL	National Rugby League
NRLW	National Rugby League Women's
NSW	New South Wales
NSWRFL	New South Wales Rugby Football League
NSWRL	New South Wales Rugby League
NZR	New Zealand Rugby
PC	psychological contract
PIRA	Pacific Islands Rugby Alliance
RA	Rugby Australia
RAP	Reconciliation Action Plans
RLWC	Rugby League World Cup
SFD	sport-for-development
USA	United States of America

## **Glossary of Terms**

This section defines relevant terminology used throughout this study. The emphasis is on Pasifika and Māori terms.

### **Pasifika**

There is much debate regarding appropriate terminology when discussing Pacific Islander and Māori, Pacific people, Tagata Pasifika, Pacifica and Māori. However, for the purposes of this study and its Australian context, the term ‘Pasifika’ refers to the Pan-Pacific peoples and their diaspora (Polynesian, Melanesian and Micronesian), whose ethnic background includes New Zealand Māori, Samoa, Tonga, Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Niue.

The primary researcher is cognisant of the fact that such terminology can conflate diverse cultural practices and identities, which runs the risk of oversimplifying the varied and complex migratory pathways, experiences and histories of research participants and their broader communities. Pasifika communities in Australia, when compared to New Zealand, Pacific Islands and the USA, are an emerging demographic group. Pasifika cultures share commonalities, but they are also ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse.

### **Pasifika entourage**

The ‘Pasifika entourage’ refers to sociocultural motivations that influence employee expectations in the workplace, such as family, culture and spirituality.



## **National Rugby League entourage**

The ‘National Rugby League entourage’ refers to key stakeholders who may influence a Pasifika employee’s workplace relations, such as coaching staff, club and game administration staff, in addition to player agents and the media.

## **Māori Terminology**

Aroha	to love and show compassion for, care for and respect
Iwi	refers to the larger tribal communities and translates as ‘bones’
Kaupapa Māori	Māori-focused research (research for Māori by Māori)
Mana	having status, influence or power, authority or prestige
Māori	collective identity of the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand
Pākehā	often used to refer to New Zealanders of European (predominantly British) descent
Tapu	respect, sacred
Whānau	family unit (can be genealogical or based on purpose for gathering)

## **Pasifika Terminology**

Alagaupu	Samoan proverb
Alofa	to love and show compassion for, care for and respect
Āiga	family
Fa’aaloalo	courtesy and being respectful
Fa’asamoa	cultural practice and tradition
Fonofale	meeting house

Mea alofa	gift
Moni	real, authentic
Palagi	often used to refer to people of European (predominantly British) descent
Pasifika	blanket term for Polynesian (including Māori), Micronesian and Melanesian
Tagata	people
Talanoa	conversation, deep discussion, dialogue
Tapu	sacred

## Abstract

This thesis was concerned with diversity management in professional rugby league football in Australia. It examined the workplace perceptions and expectations of two groups: Pasifika (Pacific Islander and Māori) employees and their non-Pasifika employers in the National Rugby League (NRL), the premier rugby competition in Australasia. The study sought to explore whether Pasifika workplace perceptions, expectations, and contributions aligned with diversity management practices in the NRL.

The study adopted an interdisciplinary approach that incorporated both Pacific Studies and diversity management. It drew upon psychological contract (PC) theory in order to understand workplace experiences. These were explored via a culturally appropriate *talanoa* approach to interpersonal dialogue, this involving exchange of conversations, stories and ideas with 40 relevant individuals in the NRL.

The findings revealed that Pasifika employees in the NRL place greater emphasis on *relational* aspects of the exchange relationship, specifically drawing upon familial motivations, cultural values and customs, as well as community service and spirituality. The study was able to contribute to sport management scholarship in two key ways. First, by advancing qualitative research into Pasifika workplace experiences – both on and off the field – in elite rugby league. Second, the thesis broadened the scope of psychological contract research to encompass diversity management considerations – in this case by generating knowledge about how Pasifika employees navigate Western workplaces.

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