

O le a'ano o feiloaiga

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The place of alcohol in the lives of Samoan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand

A report prepared by Sector Analysis, Ministry of Health for the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand

ALAC Research Monograph Series: No 8

Wellington 1997

ISSN 1174-1856

ISBN 0-477-06323-3

Explanation of Title

O le a’ano o feiloaiga means the heart of the matter is the coming together. Feiloaiga means the renewing, establishing, consolidation of connections or relationships.

Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank all those people who took part in this study and who shared their stories with us. We hope that this report will generate more discussion within the Samoan community and encourage more people to share their views.

We especially thank Samoan Capital Radio and Tupuola Sione Malifa who hosted a talkback radio programme with Myra McFarland about the project.

Our thanks again to Tupuola Sione Malifa who suggested the title and to those people who read through the report at its different stages and offered comment.

Fa’afetai tele lava

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Samoan Border Design

Vaitoa Baker

As a freelance illustrator of mixed ethnic groups, having the opportunity to work on this project that incorporates many designs of the Pacific, I hope I have done justice to each. I also want to give thanks to my partner, Yvette, whose love keeps me going.

Disclaimer

This report was prepared by staff of Sector Analysis, Ministry of Health for the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand. Its purpose is to inform discussion and assist future health promotion strategies. Therefore, the opinions expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand nor the Ministry of Health.

ALAC's Alcohol and Pacific Islands Research Project Reports

This report is one of a series of seven studies published in 1997

- The place of alcohol in the lives of people from Tokelau, Fiji, Niue, Tonga, Cook Islands and Samoa living in New Zealand: an overview
- Inu Pia: The place of alcohol in the lives of Tokelauan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Na tabili kavoro: The place of alcohol in the lives of Fijian people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Vai Mamali: The place of alcohol in the lives of Niuean people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Kapau tete to ha fu'u siaine he 'ikai tete ma'u ha talo pe koha 'ufi ko e fu'u siaine pe: The place of alcohol in the lives of Tongan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- Kaikava me kare Inuinu: The place of alcohol in the lives of Cook Islands people living in Aotearoa New Zealand
- O le a'ano o feiloaiga: The place of alcohol in the lives of Samoan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand

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O le a'ano o feiloaiga

Aims of the study

The Pacific people's alcohol research project was set up to describe the place of alcohol in the lives of Tokelauan, Fijian, Niuean, Tongan, Cook Islands and Samoan people living in Aotearoa New Zealand. The reason for doing this was to enable the Alcohol Advisory Council of New Zealand (ALAC) to design alcohol health promotion strategies and materials suitable for the different Pacific communities.

Pacific people came from small close-knit communities in the Pacific where everyone knew everyone else, including their genealogy, to large cities where they knew few people. As migrants and the children of migrants, it is important to share and pass on the stories of the homeland. But it is equally important to share the stories of migration. The migration stories tell what it was like to be pioneers in a new land, building new communities, learning new ways from new people. For a lot of the early Pacific migrants, being introduced to alcohol was part of that new learning experience.

How the research was carried out

One important objective of the research was to have at least two members from each of the Pacific communities working in the research field team. Each community would then be able to gather its own stories and information.

Myra McFarland and Tunumafono Ken Ah Kuoi carried out most of the fieldwork. They were assisted by Damas Potoi who interviewed a group of younger men. Myra and Carmel Peteru translated the interviews from Samoan and Tali Beaton helped transcribe (write out) those interviews.

Information about the purpose of the research was given out and people were asked if they wanted to take part. Those who agreed to take part were then asked to read and sign a consent form, which showed that they understood the purpose of the research and were still willing to take part. Some people were interviewed individually and some took part in group interviews. The interviews were taped and transcribed. Written copies of the interviews were returned to the participants to check and edit.

Why the interview method was chosen

The research method of interviewing individuals and groups of people was chosen because the researchers wanted to gain an in-depth account of Samoan people's experiences with alcohol. The people interviewed were able to think over their personal experiences and try to give meaning to those experiences.

The information collected does not claim to be representative of the whole Samoan community but only of those persons interviewed. Publishing these stories will hopefully encourage more discussion within the Samoan community about the role of alcohol in people's lives.

Direct quotes from the people interviewed are included throughout the report. This is to help the reader view life through those people's eyes. While the researchers have attempted to represent the views of the participants, they take full responsibility for the interpretation placed on the information gathered and welcome discussion from the Samoan community.

Who took part in the study – the participants

The women's ages ranged from 18 years to 52 years of age.

The men's ages ranged from 21 years of age to over 75 years.

In this study, "younger people" refers to those under 30 years of age and "older people" refers to those 30 years of age and older.

How the interviews were carried out

As a lead into starting the study, Myra McFarland hosted a talkback radio programme on Samoan Capital Radio with Tupuola Sione Malifa. Myra outlined the aim of the research and posed two questions for the listeners to ring in about. Listeners rang in with their comments and two people asked Myra if they could take part in the in-depth interviews.

Most of the interviews were conducted in the Samoan language.

Thirteen women were interviewed. There were two group interviews: an older women's group with five participants, and a younger women's group with four participants. As well, four women took part in individual face-to-face interviews.

Sixteen men were interviewed. There were three group interviews: an older men's group with six participants, and two younger men's groups, each with three participants. Four older men were interviewed individually but one was a telephone interview and another was a couple interview because the man was interviewed with his wife.

What the interviews asked

The interviews asked open-ended questions around the themes of:

- social or family events where Samoan people would drink alcohol
- who Samoan people drank with, for example, whether men and women drank together
- what type of drinks Samoan people preferred
- the differences between drinking in Samoa and drinking in Aotearoa New Zealand
- whether there was a Samoan style or styles of drinking
- how the people taking part in the interview first started drinking alcohol
- issues that were brought up in the interview by the people being interviewed.

Open-ended questions are those questions which ask people to describe or explain their point of view. Closed questions, on the other hand, usually require simple *yes* or *no* answers. Open-ended questions generally start with words like: *How . . . , Can you describe . . . , What . . . , Where . . . , Who . . .*

In both the group and individual interviews the interviewer was guided by the direction taken by the person or people being interviewed.

How the research information was analysed (made sense of)

The transcripts from the interviews were translated and then analysed by comparing people's experiences and views to identify the similarities and differences and if any common themes were emerging. Those people in the research field team who were members of the community offered their experience and wisdom and explained points about the culture and the community. Historical and anthropological accounts of Samoa were read to provide background information and set the context for the report.

Background

The Samoan population is the largest Pacific people's group in Aotearoa New Zealand, making up just over half the Pacific people in Aotearoa New Zealand. Half the Samoan population living in Aotearoa New Zealand were born in the Pacific with most coming from Western Samoa rather than American Samoa. The other half of the Samoan population were mostly born in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Samoan population is youthful in that half were under 20 years of age and only 4 percent were over 60 years of age (Statistics New Zealand 1995).

Early contact with alcohol

Long before alcohol arrived on Samoa's shores, 'ava (kava) was an established part of Samoan culture. The Samoan terms for alcohol came from the word 'ava. Alcohol can be called 'ava malosia (strong kava) or 'ava o'ona (sour or bitter kava).

Whaleships were probably in Samoan waters from around the 1820s to the 1860s. Apia was used as a provisioning depot for the ships (Richards 1992). The missionaries arrived in the 1830s. Deserters from the whaleships, escaped convicts from the convict ships and the missionaries were the first Europeans to make close contact with the Samoan people.

The missionaries and the local matai (chiefs) were not keen to have alcohol available. The following is an example of the regulations agreed to by matai in Apia and the American and British government representatives in 1839:

All trading in spirituous liquors or landing the same is strictly forbidden; any person offending shall pay a fine of twenty-five dollars, and the vessel to which he belongs shall receive no more refreshments. Any spirituous liquors found on shore shall be seized and destroyed (Richards 1992:105).

These regulations helped keep Apia a "dry" port until 1850, when Pritchard, an ex-missionary turned consul and merchant, "imported the first cargo of spirits for the Apia port trade" (Gilson 1970:177).

When it came, however, to the 'awa *papalagi*, the white man's kava, the Samoans preserved their dignity. Certainly, a few would drink spirits, especially if Europeans were paying, but the large majority acquired no taste for it. Indeed, they were offended by heavy drinking, or at any rate by its effects, which was more than one could say for most of Samoa's foreigners (Gilson 1970:181).

Gilson also notes that the missionaries did not mention drunkenness being a problem amongst the Samoans till the early 1870s and then they blamed it on the war that was happening probably at the time.

During German rule, Europeans were able to purchase alcohol but Samoans "were totally prohibited from buying or consuming liquor, or even having it in their possession" (Marsack 1961:163). In 1914 New Zealand occupied Western Samoa which led to the 1921 Samoa Act which prohibited the sale of liquor to all residents, including Europeans. However, the act did allow the use of alcohol for "medicinal purposes". (Casswell 1986:24, Marsack 1961):

So the Chief Medical Officer issued medical permits as a matter of course to all the European population, authorizing them to purchase from the Government, which took over the business from the Administrator, a specified quantity of beer and spirits every month. The quantity specified in the permit had little to do with the health of the permit-holder; his social position was the determining factor . . . Each permit entitles the holder to a stated number of monthly "points", ranging from 24 in the case of a young unmarried person to 108 in that of a person on the top rung of the social ladder. A bottle of beer takes one point, a bottle of spirits twelve (Marsack 1961:164-5).

However, even with a medical certificate the supply of alcohol was limited and the European population set about producing home-brew, skills the Samoans quickly learnt and excelled at.

Fa'amafu or pulu (home-brew)

The term pulu comes from the English word "brew" and fa'amafu means "to ferment".

For Samoan people, fa'amafu continued to be a cheaper alternative to Palagi (European) alcohol. Although in the 1950s the Liquor Commission recommended that alcohol should be available to the public, the matai were against ordinary Samoan people being given the right to drink. As Marsack pointed out, by prohibiting alcohol, the making of fa'amafu became a flourishing industry. Furthermore, the home-made alcohol contained a higher percentage of alcohol than the liquor from the Liquor Store (Marsack 1961:Chapter 17). Lemert (1964) shows the extent of fa'amafu production:

Some notion of the scale of brewing is gained from the situation in a village near Salailua, on Savaii, where there are at least 20 brewmakers for an adult male population of 250. At least one of these brewers averages an output of 200 twenty-six ounce bottles per week (Lemert 1964:366).

Lemert found that fa'amafu drinkers were usually "young, untitled, single men" who had started drinking at an early age, that is before 15 years of age (Lemert 1964:367).

Usually, fa'amafu was not made in the village but rather in the bush at the back of the village on family land. This was because of the laws that prohibited alcohol drinking. Each village had its own rules to keep the peace and alcohol was seen as causing trouble. Therefore, drinking sessions of fa'amafu were kept secret because village law was binding and respected. However, the village knew when men were drinking because they would start ususu (making a noise, shouting, yahooing). Heavy fines were imposed by the village council on anyone caught drinking. The fines would be, for example, two boars or sometimes a tin of cabinbread or a box of herrings and payment would go to the village council.

In the town area there was more freedom because it was away from village life. Some of the older participants had been introduced to alcohol when they had gone to Apia to work or study and had stayed with families who made fa'amafu. Often the women would make the fa'amafu but it was only the men who would drink it.

For some people, fa'amafu became a business. People who made fa'amafu to sell became clever at hiding their set up. In the village, people who wanted to buy fa'amafu, would take a basket so that they could pretend they were going to take food to the plantation workers and then they would go by a back route to the fa'amafu brewer. One man said that when he had money he bought beer but otherwise he would drink fa'amafu. Fa'amafu was sold for 20 sene a bottle and according to participants, it was strong.

The brewmakers were often at the mercy of their buyers because inu le gutu tautala foi le gutu (the mouth drinks, the mouth talks). For example, if someone bought a bottle of fa'amafu and did not get one bottle free (a common practice for good customers) then they would report the brewmaker to the police who would then carry out a police raid. Marsack too supports the fact that it was mostly women who brewed the beer. The women would appear in Court and would usually say that they brewed the beer to keep their husbands at home (Marsack 1961:168-169).

Several older men referred to the making of fa'amafu and offered different recipes:

The first thing is pata to make beer, which come from the juice of the scraped raw potatoes. This juice is known as the 'alu [dregs] which produce the strong taste of alcohol. Then you add the molo [malt] which is like honey, and sugar. When the mixture is strong, you add more sugar and water now and then.

As can be seen from the following story, the methods used to produce fa'amafu were not always very clean. One participant told how he had been part of a fa'amafu drinking session in the plantation, but when they went to pour the drink out of the bottle, only a few drops came out. Something was blocking the bottle. When they looked they discovered a big cockroach stuck in the bottle. They poked the cockroach out with a coconut frond and drank the bottle so as not to waste the fa'amafu.

According to Marsack the percentage of alcohol in fa'amafu as being high:

... it is seldom less than ten or twelve [percent]; fifteen to eighteen is common. There have in fact been cases when the Analyst has assured the Court that the percentage of alcohol in the sample of home-brew produced has been as high as twenty-five (Marsack 1961:169).

However, since it is not possible to produce beer with such a high alcohol content (it is unlikely that the alcohol content of beer is ever above 12 percent), what Marsack referred to as fa'amafu must have been sini ai-vao or sipili ai-vao. Lemert (1964:366) suggests that for fa'amafu to have such a high alcohol content, it must have been strengthened "by the addition of spirits".

One man spoke of making fa'amafu:

They told me that I had to boil up the hops and pulverise it to get the malt. It would be stirred and then sugar added in a large basin; add sugar and pour it with the malt. Hot water would be added to melt the sugar and to burn the malt. Pata was added to revive the faamafu.

What is the English equivalent of pata?

I don't know, but it is that thing at the bottom of the bottle which rises, that is called pata. It is not found in the palagi beer because their beer is well filtered. The Samoan homebrew has the pata which solidifies at the bottom of the bottle.

Is it like butter that has melted?

It also appears in the vats into which the beer is poured. Pata is solid like our Samoan starch. When the water is removed, it is thick like flour.

What is hops?

Hops is what is used to make bread. It helps in the rising of the flour. There is a plant called hops.

What is the Samoan of hops?

I don't know! The Palagi call it hops. It is bought and boiled, sifted and the juice is poured in the bottle.

Was hops sold?

Yes. It was sold in blocks. It is like weetbix, that is what hops looks like.

The making of fa'amafu

O le pata lea o le a lona - tusa o le a lona ta'uga faapapalagi?

Ou ke le iloa poo le a loga taua faapapalagi, ao le mea lea e i lalo i le muli o le fuga, lea o loo pugapuga ae ai siga mea i luga, o le mea la lena e ta'u o le pata. E le maua la i le i le pia papalagi ia le mea lena, ona o le pogai o la e faamamaina lelei ia le pia lena. Ao le pia faaSamoa oga fai, le home-brew, e maua ai la ia le mea i le ko'a i lalo i le 'alu la lea e to'a i le muli o le fagu, ia le mea la lena e igoa o le pata.

Lea e tai pei e foliga o le pata pe a melt a?

Eo foi la i mo mea pe a fai ia mo mea o kalone o le pia, a ua uma ona utu. Ia o la e to'a tai pei foi o mea foi ia - pe a fai mo mea ia o masoa - faaSamoa a tatou, ona aveese lea o le vai, ia ao la ua to'a mafiasia tai pei se falaoa (mata).

Ia o le o le suka la lea ina ua ua matala la lea, e le faapea e sasaa vevelaina i kokogu o le paka. A sasaa vevela i kokogu o le paka oga pe ai lea o le paka. Ae faakali seia maalili lelei ia le - ia le a foi - ia le vai-vevela lea sa faamakala ai ia le suka, ia ga faakoa sasaa loa lea i

kokogu a ua i ai ma le - ma le malt. Ua mumu la ia le - ia le pia. Ia o le - a uma loa lena, oga saka loa la lena o le mea o le hops.

O le a lea mea o le hops?

O le hops o le mea lea mai le - e fai ai foi mo falaoa. E fesoasoani i le fefekega i le faa fefekeiga o mo le falaoa. E i ai la le mea lega le laau lega o le hops.

O le a le faaSamoa o lena mea?

Ou ke le iloa! E ka'u faapapalagi a o le hops. Oga aumai la lea saka, faamama lea ae sasaa loga sua - e sasaa la ia kokogu o le fagu o le pia lea.

Sa faatau le laau lena na e ta'ua - le hops?

Oi ioe e faakau. E faatau e e a foi e fai poloka - ia ia le mea. I, pei a pei a pei o le vaai foi lele I le mea o le - le mea o le meaai foi lele pei o le meaai a kamaiki, lea ua kausi ai foi kakou makukua - weetbix - tai faapega foliga o le o le hops.

Sini ai-vao (bush gin) and sipili ai-vao (bush spirits)

Fa'amafu was distinguished from sini ai-vao (bush gin) and sipili ai-vao (bush spirits). The latter two, were seen as being much stronger than fa'amafu. Sini ai-vao was produced by distilling.

... the sini ai-vao[bush gin] does not need molo [malt] or pata [dregs], but is left for many weeks or months just like our delicacy called samilolo [fermented coconut/seawater], until it is clear, then you can use it. It is made with sugar, and potatoes, but I cannot remember the other stuff that is added to it. It is different from beer. (Man)

Although other participants were not clear on how the sini ai-vao was made they knew that there was always a lot of glass tubing (for the distillation) and that it was often made from fermented fruits.

While participants referred to sipili ai-vao, they did not explain whether sipili ai-vao was different from sini ai-vao, or if it referred to alki (lantern spirits, white methylated spirits).

Alki (lantern spirits or white methylated spirits)

Some men spoke of starting their drinking with alki, obtained from the hospital, and perfume. One participant told how the alki, which was used at the hospital for cleaning sores, was filtered using a breadfruit leaf:

A green leaf because the other side [lower] of the leaf is rough which is used as a filter. You pour the alki on it and it will drip down into the container while the white stuff sticks to the leaf. That is the bad [residue] stuff separated from the alcohol. That [alcohol] is what you mix.

Another man said they then mixed the filtered alki with water:

You drink it slowly because it is bitter. It is easy to drink but the problem is as many have explained, others have been harmed by it because it burns your innards.

They only drank this when there was no beer or fa'amafu. Some also tried perfume which was filtered by pouring over toast.

Migration to Aotearoa New Zealand

Since 1962, Western Samoa's migration to Aotearoa New Zealand has been regulated by a quota system which has enabled over 1000 people per year to gain permanent entry (Krishnan, Schoeffel and Warren 1994:17). In 1991 Samoan people numbered 85 743 which meant they made up half the Pacific people living in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The role of alcohol in the Samoan community in Aotearoa New Zealand

Alcohol was used in different ways: to celebrate or mark special events and to encourage people to socialise or relax.

Participants in the study used alcohol to get together and socialise with their families and friends. Sometimes this was on special occasions and sometimes this was a regular event, such as meeting with friends or work colleagues each payday for a social drink:

On Thursdays, once people are paid and work is finished, it is like a family. We sit with each other and drink and laugh and talk. (Woman)

Men in particular spoke of drinking to be happy:

A'o la'u a igu lakou a o'o loa ga fiafia a'o la e i luga o le 'ava e makua fiafia lava i le mea e gaka ai le fiafia. [Malie]. Pe a va'ai aku fo'i o la e iai kagaka e fiafia lava i le mea e gaka ai le fiafia. [Malie]. Pe a va'ai aku fo'i o la e iai kagaka e fiafia iai ma iloa e kukusa uma igu ma kalagoa . . .

But when I drink and when I'm really happy while intoxicated I just really enjoy myself. I wouldn't know the limit of my happiness or my enjoyment . . .

Drinking could be seasonal, for example, a person may drink more during the rugby season. An older man who enjoyed drinking through summer said:

During winter I hardly feel like drinking. I don't know about these guys but the cold beer and the cold air of winter - even when I touch the cold can . . . [I don't feel like drinking].

Young people mentioned that their drinking was restricted by a lack of money. If there were bills to be paid they could not afford to drink.

People's perceptions of drinkers and non-drinkers

People had different ideas of what it meant to be a "drinker" or a "non drinker".

Some people associated the word "drinker" with a person who abused alcohol. These were usually people who did not see that there could be a range of drinking styles. For them, the concept of moderate drinking did not exist. Others were able to distinguish a range of drinking styles and for them being a "drinker" merely meant that one drank alcohol.

The term "non-drinker" was seen by some as being a person who never touched alcohol and by others as being someone who only drank a glass of alcohol on special occasions.

Sometimes people who did not drink alcohol were seen as people who did not know how to have fun or relax or they were associated with "being good". On the other hand, some of the young men saw non-drinkers as people who had a "natural high" and who did not need alcohol to achieve that.

Where do Samoan people drink?

Drinking was often associated with sports, for example, after a game of rugby or netball, or a round of golf:

As I've said, about this time because it's summer I drink beer at the bowling club. You're not allowed to drink if you're going to play, not till the game is finished. When the game is finished, it's impolite to leave straight after the game without staying to drink a glass or two, to socialise and talk with others. (Man)

Workplaces often had Happy Hours each week or month where work colleagues could drink together after work.

Some of the older men talked about being the only ones in the family who drank alcohol, so they preferred to go to the pub to socialise with other drinkers rather than drink at home alone.

Younger men and women were more likely to drink either before or while night clubbing. Some drank before going out because that was cheaper than buying alcohol at the night clubs. The most popular night club venues in Wellington for younger people seemed to be Mid-City and Banana Court. Banana Court was also

frequented by older people who enjoyed its Pacific Islands atmosphere and music. Vincents Bar in Newtown was also mentioned.

Who do Samoan people drink with?

Since people drank to be happy and tended to let go of their inhibitions when drinking, being with people they knew well meant that the drinker could feel safe while they were drinking.

Younger men were careful when drinking with male elders present:

You respect an elder . . . ideally you're one or two beers behind. You're not in the lead.

They were also careful not to drink too much or they might get sent home.

What types of alcohol do Samoan people drink?

As mentioned earlier the older men had often started their drinking with home-brew or lantern spirits.

Men preferred beer or spirits especially whiskey while women were happier with wine and spirits. The women seemed to prefer sweeter drinks as those who disliked beer said they did not like its bitter taste. One woman said that she hardly ever drank spirits because strong alcohol made her become angry. She enjoyed drinking wine because it made her feel happy.

Changes in behaviour when drinking

Some people experienced quite significant changes in their behaviour when drinking.

We start by buying a jug and I wouldn't talk. And after two jugs I've changed. I've become talkative. I talk all the time. I drink and I'm happy. (Man)

Others commented on how people they knew changed when drinking and became someone they did not know. Some people became more outgoing and talkative. They lost their reserve and were friendlier than normal. Others became more open about expressing their feelings.

There are lots of changes such as they like talking, laughing, slap someone playfully and dancing even though they don't know that person. They greet you but you don't know them, or they become noisy and disturb the peace [kiususu] and challenge some families, thinking it's only himself and this world. I've seen lots of those things like at this wedding, they were saying speeches and this matai pulled up his chair to the front and made his own speech. He took off his shirt and went and sat in the front where the speeches were said. But I've seen this person and he's not like that, he's very quiet. [E le seua lago i gutu]. He's been drinking for quite sometime at the bar, before the family arrived there. Then afterwards, he was just sitting there and calling out [kiususu]. He wasn't sent outside because he was part of the family. (Woman)

Acceptable drinking behaviour was knowing how to control one's behaviour when drinking and not causing embarrassment or trouble to others.

. . . as long you don't create a big disturbance . . . as long as you don't offend someone else. (Man)

A person who can control their drinking. When they drink, they look like someone who hasn't touched a drop of alcohol. They can walk, talk and stand but they've been drinking. That's something known to us Samoans. (Woman)

How people knew when they had had enough to drink

Oh when you sort of wobble. You actually can't stand properly and when you have blurred vision. (Woman)

I've never become drunk. When I know I'm starting to get dizzy, then I go and eat something, and I wouldn't drink anymore but mix my coca-cola and walk around pretending I was drinking but I do that in any party we have because I love my kids. (Woman)

Some of the younger women said that they drank till they were "just getting a bit drunk" and then stopped. They did not go beyond that limit. When people drank past what was regarded as the accepted limit, others became angry with their unacceptable behaviour. According to some of the participants if the drunk people were not taken away they ran the risk of being beaten up.

Some of the men agreed that they sometimes showed off when drinking and they could end up not knowing they had had enough until they fell down:

Sometimes when I've thought, "Oh I'm not drunk. I haven't had enough to drink" and then I said to the other guys, "Oh come on let's go" and then we went and jumped in the car and the car dropped us off and what happened? I tried to get up but I kept going down and down. I kept falling down [*laughter*]. I really tried and I thought that I was going up yet I was going down. I mean that sort of thing happens to your body because it's telling you that you've had enough yet the mind is telling you otherwise.

Some women spoke of eating before and while drinking so that they would not get drunk:

... because I know in my situation if I drink without eating then I become drunk quicker. I also get a sore stomach and I get dizzy if I have not eaten first.

Some of the younger men said that "drinking on an empty stomach, that's no good", "if you haven't had a feed then it really gets you eh". They said that drinking on an empty stomach made them feel really tired.

Knowing how to drink

There are people who say the person who knows how to drink is the person who can control his anger. It may be that they are right because once they become drunk, they go home to sleep. But, the person who does not know how to drink, they become drunk and stay on in the pub, cause fights, listen to things that make them angry. That is probably the type of person to whom the saying is relevant to, he does not know how to drink. The person who is used to drinking, once they become drunk, they go home, that is probably the person who knows how to drink.
(Man)

Gender and alcohol

The men spoke of a “primetime” for drinking, that is, a person in their 20s and 30s. Some of the older men looked back with nostalgia to the years when they were younger and able to drink more daily. As they had become older, their drinking had reduced:

E le’o koe iai fo’i se kulaga o le malosi o le igu i legei vaikau.

How I used to drink before is not like how I drink now - I don’t drink as much now.

This supports Neich and Park’s finding that there seemed to be “a strong link between the male life cycle and the level of consumption” (Neich and Park 1988:20).

Some of the women said they had reduced their drinking because of family responsibilities such as bringing up children. Some of the older women felt they and their children had suffered because of their husbands’ heavy drinking.

While men and women did drink with one another, each group preferred to drink by themselves.

The men found that when they were drinking with women they had to be careful about the language they used in case one of the women was offended by what they said:

I find I can’t just say anything in a mixed group unless I know the kind of people and their behaviour and attitudes. (Man)

An all-male session would be noisy with the men jeering at one another and making jokes that would not be considered appropriate if women were present. When women were present the jeering and joking calmed down:

. . . except there are those kind of females you know, those ones who are sociable in their attitude, they wouldn’t mind whatever language we use but it’s based on the thing that there will be no offence behind what’s said. (Man)

Also there was the problem of jealousy:

While we’re talking about this, the other side that I look at, there are some fathers and mothers that have a not so good attitude. Say, for example, some mothers are not very happy, for example, me and my wife. If I know that she doesn’t have a very good attitude and if there are other women here and say if I talk too much to those women, then she may have a suspicious attitude. The meaning of what I’m saying is that if I know that there’s something like that in my girlfriend or spouse’s attitude then we shouldn’t go together so that we can avoid trouble. Maybe we wouldn’t argue in front of everyone but we may have an argument at home. (Man)

Women would drink in mixed groups but preferred to drink with other women:

... but it is best when it is only me and my girlfriends so that we can talk about what has been happening and help with their problems. I also feel free in talking and laughing because you become worried when you want to talk freely in a mixed group but can't in case it makes someone angry.

Some of the older women spoke of gatherings where women would drink. These were usually celebrations after sports competitions. Some women would drink wine and spirits while others just drank coca-cola. These parties were considered lots of fun because of the dancing:

But as far as these parties go, and I can testify to this, they are not public parties because the minister cannot know [about the party]. If the minister knew that the women went to a party, he will stand up on Sunday and remove, for example, positions which may be held as in a deaconship, otherwise membership of that church.

She felt that drinking in mixed groups led to problems such as sexual liaisons with other people's partners.

I've been in parties where the majority are men. During these sessions, they would end up in a fight. And if someone is dancing and someone else does something stupid or behaves in an ill manner they would end up arguing and it gets into a big fight, which started with only two, but then everyone else jumps in.

Macho image for men

Among men there seemed to be an accepted image that a good drinker was someone who could drink but not show the effects of it. While for some men this meant they moderated their drinking, for others it meant practising long bouts of drinking with the aim of being able to drink everyone else under the table and still be standing.

O le feagaiga i le va o le tuagane ma lona tuafafine (brother/sister relationship)

Feagaiga refers to the special relationship or covenant between sisters and brothers. The older men spoke of women being highly respected. Because of this respect there was a need for controlled behaviour to preserve respectful relationships between men and women as in the brother/sister relationship.

Heavy alcohol drinking often resulted in the tongue being loosened and words being said that were later regretted or people being physically abused. A man who abused women was disrespectful to his sister and a woman who had no respect for men was disrespectful to her brother.

The difference between drinking in Samoa and drinking in Aotearoa New Zealand

When you go to Samoa you wouldn't find a person drinking by themselves in the house. (Man)

In Samoa people drink with family, friends and neighbours:

There is no way you can stop your neighbours coming over. It's the attitude of happiness. It's the Samoan nature. I think the enjoyment is when you come together to socialise, to share a thankful heart. The main thing is to have a happy heart. (Man)

For Samoan people who traveled back and forth between Samoa and Aotearoa New Zealand, there was similarity in that alcohol was readily available in both places. But Samoa was seen as being a more relaxed place and people felt more comfortable in their own language and culture.

The participants felt that parents in Samoa kept "a more watchful eye on girls". There were only a few parents who allowed their daughters out, but the young women would sneak out anyway. Because the town area (Apia) was small:

... you hear like who was drunk that night and who drinks this much and who doesn't drink.

Some of the younger men said noise and drunkenness were tolerated more in Aotearoa New Zealand where people would only call Noise Control if the partying became excessive and the offenders would be told off. In Samoa, people found noise and excessive drinking offensive and were likely to deal with the offenders themselves in a drastic way:

One kind of drinking which I know from Samoa and which I have seen and heard is that when a person becomes drunk, they *ususu* or someone will say something which will make another angry. Suddenly the person will stand, *ususu*, walk towards the village and say something to them. As a result a *faaumu*¹ is prepared for the person who walked up to them. This behaviour is confined to Samoa. But here, I hardly hear of the preparation of a *faaumu*. The law, the government [has taken over]. (Woman)

It is true that these are Samoan behaviours. When one *ususu* on the road, it is showing off and wanting to make a display [of one's self]. People from the village will physically "chastise" that person in order to teach him a lesson because he has acted disrespectfully on the land. He has behaved in a boorish or common manner. Within New Zealand, I have not heard anyone *ususu*. What is continuing to happen are the quarrels and stabbings. These are what is happening in New Zealand. (Woman)

¹ *Faaumu*: the act of symbolically cooking someone on an *umu*. This is a derogative term and applied to someone who has caused a serious and grave offence. The person would be tied to a pole like an animal, carried to the *umu* and placed there (Peteru 1997).

Is there a Samoan style of drinking?

Many of the participants believed that some people's style of drinking was "o le inu a e masani ai o le inu a ia pe le mata" (drink until you drop).

One younger woman, who said that Samoan people drank alcohol like water, noticed:

. . . for instance the Palagi are into sipping their drink and they'll probably what, have one or two, while there's this in another corner, like the Maori or Samoans, they are into drinking more, more than anyone else. And like they, they'll get drunk faster than the Palagi on the other side.

A group of older women thought that people often drank to "show off":

It is like at times, they want to show their strength or, that they want to pick a fight. The Palagi, they drink sensibly and enjoy themselves unless there is some tension between themselves.

Other evidence of showing off could be seen in people who boasted about their origins when drinking, saying such things as, "I was born in a family of kings".

Again there seemed to be general agreement that the Palagi (Europeans) knew how to handle their drink and that they did not drink to get drunk:

Another thing is, once the Palagi know that they have drunk too much, they will not drive. During the days that I was a cleaner, the Palagi lock their cars and call a taxi to take them. (Woman)

By comparison, this woman said that Samoan people would drive no matter how intoxicated they were. In her opinion, other ethnic groups also drove their cars when drunk but Palagi did not.

Some of the older men felt there were as many different styles of drinking as there were Samoan people but they also referred to the style of competitive drinking among some men:

It's like I have observed, one person is jealous of the other because he couldn't beat that other person's drinking and then that person tries to attack that person who is still drinking strongly.

Being the last one to finish drinking for the night was seen as the ultimate goal. The younger men thought that, ". . . Samoans love to think they can drink more than other people". They spoke of others being made fun of if they could not keep up with the drinking:

Well if all the boys are standing after a couple of hours and someone's been out for a couple of hours, you get shit.

There seemed to be technique involved because some drank too quickly and became drunk while others used the strategy of sitting on the same beer.

Some of the younger people thought that Samoan people who had just come over from Samoa tended to be macho at drinking sessions but that when they had lived in Aotearoa New Zealand for a while, their behaviour changed.

Reducing or stopping drinking

Women often reduced their drinking when they got into a serious relationship or started having children. One woman spoke of how she started drinking late in life (at 39) and came to enjoy it. She would drink till she was drunk but her children became upset at seeing her in this state. It was because of her children that she stopped. They were used to their father drinking but begged her to stop.

Men who drank heavily reduced their drinking as they became older. Some also stopped for health reasons or because they became more committed to the church. For example, one man who had drunk continuously as a younger man, including taking beer with him to work, stopped drinking “because it was not God’s will nor was it in his scriptures. I understood from there that alcohol was not good for the body”.

It was not clear whether those who stopped drinking stopped completely or became occasional drinkers.

The participants’ introduction to drinking

The participants started drinking alcohol for many different reasons. Some of the older women did not start till late in life. For example, one woman did not start till she was 39 years old.

Usually people started drinking because the friends or family they mixed with drank and to fit in they would have a glass too. Some people remained occasional drinkers while others developed a taste for alcohol and started drinking regularly.

The younger people were more likely to have started drinking at an early age, for example with school friends, though some of the older men also started drinking fa’amafu when they were in their teens.

Men in particular were more likely to have taken up drinking through being involved in sports such as rugby.

I started drinking when I was in the fourth form, 14 or 15 years old, I can’t remember. I was going through a lot of problems and my friends thought that a jug, you know, would help me and so I had one, and then

*I started drinking from there and I went off the beer on to the spirits.
(Younger woman)*

I started when I first went to work with my friends because they drank so I'd tag along with them. I didn't used to drink before but tagged along with them 'cos they were Maoli (Maori) and the next minute I was drinking with them. (Younger woman)

I started drinking just recently when I was 39. My spouse's brother forced me to drink, at one of their family's Xmas parties. This guy (brother-in-law) noticed that I drank coke and laughed at the women drinking most of the time. He said it's not nice if a family do not drink and be happy together. So he mixed me a drink. This temptation went on and on and I went wrong last year by starting to drink. After three drinks my brother-in-law mixed me, I became drunk. (Older woman)

I never touched alcohol. When I came to New Zealand because I was sick, and my sister persuaded me to drink wine, but I refused because of my church's belief which prohibited beer, alcohol etc. My sister advised me that wine is useful to cure my illness because I don't like eating in the mornings except for a cup of tea. So every morning, I take a glass of wine. My sister says that wine will cure me because it gives me my appetite, and I think this has become useful for because I felt the changes, and I came to enjoy eating something in the afternoon. I continued drinking wine until I was cured, and up to now, wine is really useful for my body, not because I want to drink it. (Older woman)

The reason I started drinking was his [husband] sister. Him and his sister held me down, and poured the drink mixed with coca-cola [down her throat]. When I tasted it, it was sweet. So I said to them to pour me a drink, or they would think I cannot handle anything. But I've never tasted beer. (Older woman)

Okay the first time was we were at school and I had a basketball game and it started at 7 pm and my friend said, "How about after your game we go for a drink, a dozen down the road?" and it was an alleyway in Porirua so I go "Oh yeah, choice" and then we all went. Being there was my first time and um they gave me the "victory". We were sitting down that alleyway and they told me to drink it and then I was drinking it . . . and I didn't like the taste of that and I was looking at my friends and they were going for a second, third and so they gave me another can and I opened it and tipped it all on the side of me so they thought I was drinking it and I tipped all of them out and they go, and they were saying, "Far out! She's still up and she's had about 9" but they didn't know I was tipping them out because I didn't like it (Younger woman)

O le 1977 ga ou pa'i ai a'u i le pulu. A'o le vaikaimi lega o o'u Form I i le makou gu'u. O la'u aluga ou ke ka laugiu; kuli a'u e o'u makua ou ke alu e ka mai gi laugiu e puipui ai le makou fale i le vaikaimi fo'i a lele ua makagi e le'o se afa, e aumai e puipui ai pola. O'u alu aku lea

gauka i'iga e le mamao la ma kua o le falea'oga ou ke alu ou ke ka laugiu. Ou ke fo'i mai i la'u kaga laugiu, ou ke sau la o saofafa'i le auali'i makukua ga e ko'afa lea lava ou ke magakua, i lalo o le ulu o le aoa kele fo'i a lele. Fai mai le auali'i, "Sau, sau e ke alu e fa'akau mai." Kuli loa a'u i uka i le isi pikogu'u lega i uka i [village]. Ou, alu loa lea fa'akau mai fagu pulu e fa mo mea o fagu fo'i a ie. Ae o'u koe sau ae fai mai le auali'i - "Sau la'ia e kope lau ipu lea e kasi oga e alu lea i kai i le kou aiga." [laughter] Ia o'u kago lea igu le ipu a, ia uma le ipu e kasi. O le mea ou ke ofo e ga'o le fa a'u ipu a'u oki ai. O'u oki ai a i le mea lega. Oga o lea o le auali'i a'u ke'i ifoga, ia o la ou ke i luga o le ku'ugamau o le kama o lo'u kama. [laughter] Ou ke ku aku i luga ae amo aku e le ali'i lega o le makou aiga le avega laugiu ku'u i kuafale. [laughter] Su'e loa lea a'u e o'u makua fai mai po'o fea ua ou alu iai ua leva oga ou alu ou ke ka laugiu ou ke le'i sau, ae la ua ka'akia le avega laugiu. [laughter] Alu lo'u kiga su'e solo a'u i'iga. Ae koe maua mai fo'i o la ou ke ka'akia i luga o le ku'ugamau i le ma'umaga. [laughter] Omai loa aumai le mea malulu - ave loa a'u i kokogu o le fale; o'o loa i le kaeao sasa loa a'u e lo'u kama. [laughter] Ia fa'apea, ia e le koe faia la.

1977 is when I started with home-brew while I was in Form 1 in our village. I went to get some coconut leaves, some palm leaves. My parents told me to get some coconut leaves to nail around our house round the time when there were strong winds and it was nearing a hurricane. So I had to get those palm leaves to protect the blinds of the house pula. So I went there not far from the school building to get some coconut leaves. When I returned there were four old guys sitting there underneath that breadfruit or big tree and the guy said, "Come and go and buy us . . ." and they sent me to another part of the village landwards of [village]. So I went to buy bottles of brew, about four bottles. When I came back the guy said, "Oh yeah, come in. Quickly take your glass before you go to your family." So I took the glass, finished one glass and I was quite amazed. After four glasses, I died. I died there in that place and the guys left me and when I woke up I am lying on my grandfather's grave. When I stood up that other guy from my family was carrying the coconut leaves and putting them at the back of the house. My parents were looking for me because I had been gone for quite a long time to get the coconut leaves and I hadn't returned. A pile of coconut leaves were already there at the back. Then my mother went and looked for me over there and they found me - I am lying on top of my grandfather's grave in the plantation. They came and brought something cold to put on me and placed me in the house. By the morning my father smacked me so I thought I wouldn't do it again. (Man)

The church and alcohol

The church is very influential in Samoan attitudes and behaviour as can be seen from the 1991 census where 91 percent of Samoan people said they belonged to a

religious group. Belonging to a religious group does not necessarily mean the person regularly goes to church but it does suggest that Samoan people have a deep respect for the church.

While some churches tolerate occasional drinking or moderate drinking, other churches encourage their congregations not to drink. Some people mentioned church events that were supposed to be alcohol free but where people would slip outside to drink in the car park.

Some of the younger men found that if it was known at church that they went out drinking, they gained a reputation and people talked about them:

I think I've been labelled a bit of a black sheep.

For this reason, some of them stopped attending church.

Problems associated with alcohol

Lack of control was commonly mentioned as a problem associated with alcohol abuse. Some men spoke of feeling as though another person was controlling them when they were drunk while other men, usually those who had given up drinking, said that even when drunk they were always aware of what they were doing but often chose to pretend afterwards that they did not. The most common complaint was that people (usually men) who became drunk acted disrespectfully towards other people.

The older women's stories in particular referred to the heavy drinking of their partners. Men who were heavy drinkers spent money on alcohol that was supposed to be for their families and neglected their family responsibilities. Heavy drinking also led to some men becoming violent towards their partners and children. People also complained about disrespectful behaviour to members of their 'aiga (family). For example, one woman told how when her husband was drunk, her brothers would help her but her husband would fight with her brothers.

That is why our marriage was in trouble because I'm the sort of person who doesn't like alcohol. But he said to me that it is only something to relax when he has a lot of things on his mind. He calls it [beer drinking] relaxing . . . If we have a party at our home, everything gets damaged not only in the house but they smoke too and so forth. People vomited there, and in the toilet . . . My spouse is really into his beer drinking and making friends. This is why our family broke up and I stayed with the kids. He got into [drinking] beer and making girlfriends. Everything was mixed all up and he no longer made any distinction between [married and single] women.

There are men who I drank with who get home and if there is no food, all of a sudden, the poor wife is beaten for no reason. The other problem is the unnecessary harm on children. The children are happy, then he arrives home and I have seen him, pick up the child and throw the child across the room. (Older man)

He had no respect. That is why I know beer is very bad. Not only our eldest child was injured because he came home drunk and lifted him up and dropped him [baby] over his back. We took the baby to hospital and we nearly lost him [baby] there. Another

also I've found from his drinking is that he is a good liar. When he drinks, I know he plays around but I was afraid of the beer because when he comes [home] drunk, I'll get a slap. (Woman)

Some of the younger women talked about alcohol-related trouble which had occurred in their families. For example, one young woman told how her family had had a family party. Her father had just started drinking but her uncle was really drunk and he and her father had ended up fighting. Her uncle had smashed a bottle over her father's head and her father had nearly died:

... and all the kids had to go to the room and we just heard all the people talking in the kitchen. And mum was crying and saying that she hates her family and all that. And to me sometimes drinking can pull families apart you know, yeah.

One participant spoke of people's bodies becoming electrified (uila) with alcohol and when that happened words tumbled out, including things that should not be said in a public place. The tongue was loosened and people said things that they later regretted. It was said that this only happened with people who did not know how to drink. Knowing how to drink seemed to mean that a person could drink as much as they liked so long as their behaviour remained acceptable. A person who drank alcohol but appeared as though they had not been drinking was seen as someone who knew how to drink.

O lea ou te manatua i le matou nuu, sa inu ai le isi tamaloa. Na uma loa na inu, ua ona, tau'ai loa le fale. Tau'ai i ma'a lo matou fale. Pe ua 40 ma ona tupu tausaga o le tamaloa. Na alu atu loa le isi tagata o le matou aiga ave faamoe faalelei. Na usu ai lea i le taeao. Ia na ta'ai lo matou fale ae le'i iloa e ia lana mea la na fai.

I remember in my village a man was drinking and when he was drunk, he threw stones at our house. He was in his forties. A member of my family took him away and got him to sleep until he woke up in the morning. He didn't know what he was doing when he was throwing stones at our house. (Younger woman)

Summary of main points

1. This study shows that there cannot be said to be one Samoan perspective on alcohol but rather a range of perspectives.
2. Alcohol was seen as a problem because of its association with uncontrolled and disrespectful behaviour. How people behaved when drinking seemed to

be more of an issue than the amount of alcohol drunk. If people were able to drink large amounts of alcohol and still behave in an acceptable manner then there did not seem to be a problem.

3. Women, and men who had stopped drinking, were more likely to connect the effects of alcohol with health.
4. People tended to judge their drinking limits by the physical effects the alcohol had on their bodies. For example, they knew they had reached their limit when their vision became blurred or they could no longer stand up. This method was used by men and women.
5. There appeared to be little understanding of drinking in moderation. Knowing how to drink meant being able to control your behaviour rather than the amount you drank.
6. Samoan women do drink but some are forced to hide their drinking because of their church affiliations. Women's drinking tended to be more controlled since getting drunk did not seem to be an aim.
7. For some men, getting drunk was seen as the ultimate happiness. However it was also linked with competitive drinking and the need to be able to prove that they were able to keep up with everybody else's drinking.

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Appendix 1

Interview schedule

Drinking Beliefs and Practices:

Do you drink alcohol on special occasions, every week, or not at all?

Can you tell me about some of the times when you have been drinking in the last couple of weeks?

When

How often do you drink?

(How long have you been drinking? What age did you start drinking?)

What times of the week do you put aside for drinking?

Where

Where do you go to drink?

Who

Who do you drink with?

(Are they usually male/female friends?)

(Are they usually people that you know?)

Differences between male/female

Are there any differences between drinking in an all male/female group or in a mixed group?

Do people behave differently within these drinking groups?

Do you talk about different/same things depending on which group you are in?

Buying

Who buys the drinks?

(Is there an arrangement for buying the drinks?)

Do you buy drinks for others?

Before & After

What things do you/people do before having a drink? for eg. sports, movies ...

What do you do afterwards?

(What sort of activities do you take part in that don't include alcohol?)

Drinking Practices

Type of drink

(a) What is your favourite drink?

(a) What kinds of drink do you drink?

(b) What other types of drink do you like?

(b) Which do you drink most of?

How much

How much do you drink?

Are there times when you want to drink as much as you want/can?

(Why?)

Effects

Are there any changes in your behaviour when you've been drinking?

How you feel after 2-3 drinks?

How you feel after you've had quite a lot to drink?

How do you know when you've had enough to drink?

Drinking Behaviour

Normal Behaviour

From your own experience, can you describe what [insert name of Pacific group] people see as normal drinking behaviour?

Can you describe [insert name of Pacific group] people's behaviour when they've had a lot to drink?

Differences

What differences have you noticed between those who drink and those who don't? (Look for words that describe alcohol and alcohol related practices)

What differences have you noticed between drinking in [insert name of Pacific island] and drinking in New Zealand?

(Why do you think there is or there isn't?)

Is there a [insert name of Pacific group] style of drinking?

Demographics:

Male/Female

Age Group:

under 20 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+

When did you come to live in Aotearoa New Zealand?

For: "Non-Drinkers"

Do you mix socially or go out with people who drink alcohol?

[If yes ...] How do you fit into that situation?

Who

(Are they friends, family, work mates, etc.)

Are they male/female?

(And are they people you know?)

When

Can you describe any occasions that you go to where alcohol is drunk?

Where

Where would the occasions take place?

Differences between male/female

From your own experience, are there any differences between drinking in all male/female group or in a mixed group?

Do you see people behave differently within these drinking groups?

(Do people behave differently when they drink and when they don't drink?)

Do you/they talk about the same/different things as those who drink? (depending on which group you are in?)

Buying

Who buys/arranges the drinks?

Do you buy drinks for others?

What sort of activities do you take part in that don't include alcohol

As a non-drinker, what made you decide not to drink alcohol?

[If no ...] What social events/activities do you take part in where there is no alcohol?

Are there any occasions that you go to where alcohol is drunk?

Can you describe it?

As a non-drinker, what made you decide not to drink alcohol?

Questions for focus groups

These are the main questions but may need prompt/probe questions.

1. *Can you remember back to the first time you tasted/ tried alcohol? How long ago was that and how did it come about?*
2. *Can you tell us something about the times when you drink alcohol?*
For example, how often do you drink?
Where do you drink? [at home, which pubs? which nightclubs?]
Who do you drink with? [mix of ages, women/men, ethnicity, friends, family, workmates]
3. *When you're drinking with other men, do you behave differently from when you are drinking with women?*
Can you describe/talk about this?
4. *What types of drink do you drink? (which do you drink most of?)*
5. *Who buys the drinks? (What sort of arrangement is there for buying drinks?)*
6. *How much do you drink?*
7. *Are there times when you want do drink as much as you can? What times are they?*
8. *How do you know when you've had enough to drink?*
9. *What differences, if any, have you noticed between drinking in [insert name of Pacific island] and drinking here?*
10. *Do you think there is such a thing as a [insert name of Pacific group] way of drinking?*
If yes, can you explain what that is?
11. *What do you think your community sees as being acceptable drinking behaviour ?*

The Research Team

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Ken is a Pacific Islands education advisor and a teacher by trade. He enjoys rugby and is currently completing his Masters in Education. Ken is from Vaiusu and Magiagi in Western Samoa.

Lanuola Asiasiga

Lanuola has a background in education and social science research. She is now enjoying working as a health researcher. Lanuola has three children and lives in Porirua.

Tali Beaton

Tali lives in Wellington and works in a government department. She enjoyed working on this project.

Ian Hodges

Ian has research training in social anthropology and is an experienced researcher in health. He undertook a PhD in the rituals and customs associated with alcohol consumption amongst New Zealand men. Ian lives in Blockhouse Bay, Auckland.

Myra McFarland

Myra has a new baby and is completing her MA in Social Science research. Myra co-authored *The History of the Public Service Association in Western Samoa* which was published this year. She has tutored at Victoria University in Samoan Studies since 1991 and in the Anthropology Department for the past two years. In 1995 Myra also taught Samoan language at Wellington East Girls College. Myra is from Moataa, Western Samoa.

Carmel Peteru

Carmel has just been appointed the managing co-ordinator for the Pacific Islands Train the Trainers Sexual and Reproductive Health Project in the Wellington region. Carmel co-authored *O le taeao afua*, a research report recently launched by the Family Centre, that looked at Samoan perspectives of mental health.

Damas Potoi

Damas is a student completing his BCA/LLB at Victoria University. He grew up in Waitangirua, Porirua but spent his seventh form year at school in Western Samoa.