

## Case Study:

# Renting experience of older Pacific people living in Wellington

Marianna Churchward (PhD)  
Health Services Research Centre  
Victoria University of Wellington

# Who are we?

## Pacific people living in New Zealand

- ❖ Pacific people constitute 7.4% of the total NZ population  
Pacific population is diverse
- ❖ Pacific older people aged 65+ make up 2.4 percent of the 65+ population (Stats NZ)
- ❖ Pacific older people aged 55+ are a small but important minority group within the Pacific and wider communities

# Case Study:

## Pacific older people living in Wellington

- ❖ 14 older people who identified with at least one Pacific ethnicity, aged 55+
- ❖ Self-identified as Kiribati, Cook Island Māori, Niuean, Tokelauan, Samoan
- ❖ 12 females; 2 males
- ❖ 3 were NZ born; 11 were born outside of NZ
- ❖ Ages ranged from 55–76 years
- ❖ 8 renting privately, 6 renting HNZ (2 lived alone, 12 lived with others)

# Housing brief trajectory/history

- ❖ Homeowner to social housing renting (1)
- ❖ Homeowner to private renting (2)
- ❖ Private renting only (3)
- ❖ State housing renting only (4)
- ❖ Private renting to social housing renting (1)
- ❖ State housing to private renting (3)

# Renting and Pacific people

## Challenges:

- Private renting is expensive
- Difficulties dealing with real estate agents and landlords
- HNZ substandard housing

*“After five years, we’d been asking HNZ for a better house... the house (we were in) was mouldy, it was really cold... there was flooding in there and we had to evacuate. We had a newborn child and we don’t want her to get asthma from the house... there was no carpet, just the wooden floor. Nothing happened, nothing. So we decided to move out, we looked for a private. That’s when we decided to go for a private” Mrs Tee (previous HNZ renter, now a private renter)*

# Renting and Pacific people

## What is important:

- Trusting the landlords
- Tenure and stability
- Good insulation and maintenance of the house
- Tenancy rights and the support to exercise those rights
- Housing advocate to negotiate on behalf of families

*“The people are not really complaining, Island people are very shy and they don’t really complain, they ask and if it’s not done they just leave it, they’re not confident to raise it up again, he (landlord) doesn’t care. And that’s the sad part about our people. They don’t really know where to go... if he (landlord) wants to put it up (the rent), he just puts it up. He won’t fix the house... the thing is just the fear of being kicked out of the house and where do they go.” Tim (Private renter)*