



Future Pathways (Green paper)

2022

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Organisation description:	<p>The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on Te Ara Paerangi: Future Pathways (Green Paper).</p> <p>NZCCSS has six foundation members; the Anglican Care Network, Baptist Churches of New Zealand, Catholic Social Services, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Salvation Army Churches.</p> <p>Through this membership, NZCCSS represents over 250 organisations providing a range of social support services across Aotearoa. We believe in working to achieve a just and compassionate society for all, through our commitment to our faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Further details on NZCCSS can be found on our website www.nzccss.org.nz.</p>

Tirohanga Whānui | Overview

We support the overall kaupapa to strengthen and modernise the science and innovation sector to better generate an innovative research environment. We mihi this ambitious directive to make research relevant, multidisciplinary, and inclusive, and strongly support embedding Te Tiriti into the core of our research system.

Our member organisations are invested in the prioritisation of research which improves the wellbeing of their clients, and we are anxious to ensure that equity-focused, community-led research will not be lost in this new dynamic. Isolating research priorities from the political cycle is integral, as is providing key support for Early Career Researchers from diverse demographics.

Our whakaaro matua are:

One – We mihi the ambitious reform of the research sector into a modern and inclusive system.

Two – Research priorities must be decoupled from governmental priorities.

Three – Wellbeing of New Zealanders must be centred when defining research priorities.

Four - There must be clarity around the pathways for community research groups to access funding

Five – We mihi the acknowledgement of equity disparity in early career positions and encourage the development of frameworks to support these researchers.

Taunakitanga | Recommendations

Our main points are:

One – This is aspirational and ambitious sector reform

We mihi this plan to bring the governmental research engine into the modern age. A multidisciplinary system of collaborative research with Te Tiriti embedded at its core speaks volumes of the courage of this government to act in boldly in the interests of all.

Partnership with Māori and inclusion of arts and humanities subjects into the intrinsic research framework will enable holistic and future-focused research outcomes.

Recommendation Proposal One: We mihi this ambitious plan for sector reform

Two – There must be a decoupling of research priorities from government

This consultation document asks how the key priorities of research should be selected. It is our recommendation that the manifesto priorities of the currently elected government be kept discrete from the priorities of the research sector. This will have the effect of ensuring that changes in political leadership during or between funding rounds does not disrupt long-term research priorities.

The priorities need to be unifying and future-focused areas of research to ensure that they are both useful to the public who will be funding them and protected from perceived politicking. The suggestion to keep funding rounds to five years or longer will ensure that any changes in government do not immediately disrupt ongoing research, but do not ensure that the original priorities are not free from political point scoring and are instead focused on long-term systemic improvements.

Recommendation Proposal Two: We suggest ensuring research priorities are kept separate from the manifesto priorities of the elected government.

Three – Wellbeing research priority focus is essential

We advocate for a portion of the priorities, at least a third, to be focused on research questions and outcomes that are tied to the wellbeing of New Zealanders.

The welfare of all New Zealanders has been a priority of many system reforms and should continue to be centred, research in this space must be mana-enhancing, both in action and in outcomes. Indicators of wellbeing have been proposed by several governmental departments, and these could lead to areas of required research to continue to improve these metrics for the benefit of all. Defining what metrics are selected and why will be crucial.

Recommendation Proposal Three: We assert that at least a third of priorities are created as a response to welfare issues apparent in New Zealand.

Four – There must be supported funding pathways for research in the community

Community research underpins change. Our member organisations and those they serve can and should inform an understanding of the wellbeing of New Zealanders. Ensuring our innovation, programmes that work and creativity that create change can be measured, valued and grow is crucial

However, like many practitioners, the expertise lies in the doing, not the measuring. Building into this framework requirements for partnerships between communities and researchers would greatly enhance both practice and knowledge.

Prioritising funded partnerships between community and researchers will ensure innovation in this sector, and support practices and programmes that enables society in Aotearoa to thrive.

Recommendation Proposal Four: We suggest creating dedicated funding pathways and requirements for research partnerships with communities align with research priorities.

Five – Specified pathways for Early Career Researcher support are essential

We respect the acknowledgement in this report of the difficulties faced by diverse peoples when beginning their research careers. Allocating space to discuss the issues faced by these individuals allows for solutions to be proposed. We note that how best to prioritise these early career researchers is not a key question, and strongly encourage a commitment to these communities to ensure that pathways for career progression are supported at all levels.

Recommendation Proposal Five: We suggest strong diversity pathways for early career researchers be committed to by the new framework.