

Ngā Pou Rangahau

The Strategic Plan
for Māori Health Research

2010 - 2015

Our Mission

*Mā te rangatiratanga me ngā tikanga Māori
ngā rangahau hauora Māori e arahi*

Exercising rangatiratanga over the decisions that affect Māori health research

Our Vision

To conduct Māori health research that produces knowledge that changes our lives for the better and to broaden and deepen Māori health research through the expression of rangatiratanga and mātauranga

Background

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) is the Government's principal funding and investment agency for health research. The HRC is guided by the HRC Act 1990, and the goals and priorities of both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Research, Science and Technology. The HRC's Māori Health Committee is a statutory committee which is appointed to advise the Council on health issues which affect Māori. It also has responsibility for distributing funds allocated by the Council for Māori health research and career development.

The HRC's commitment to Māori health is demonstrated in the *HRC Strategic Plan 2008-13* where the specific needs of Māori are recognised.¹ The HRC recognises the Treaty of Waitangi as the founding document of Aotearoa/New Zealand and is committed to operate according to the principles of the Treaty.

The HRC's Māori Health Committee believe that a focus on Māori health will lead to improved health outcomes for all and work towards achieving our nation's full social, economic and cultural potential. Such gains may be achieved through both investing in research and in building the capacity and capability of the health research workforce. In meeting the aspirations for health gains articulated in this Strategic Plan the Māori Health Committee see the importance of Māori taking control, or exercising rangatiratanga over their health and health research.

Our Goals – Ngā Pou Kōrero

Ngā Pou Rangahau sets out the Māori Health Committee's vision for Māori health research into the future. Ngā Pou Kōrero, the six goals, are intended to provide the means by which the Strategic Plan may achieve tangible results.



1. *HRC Strategic Plan 2008-13*, Goal 1, p.6.

Goal 1 Transforming Māori health research knowledge and practice

The last five years have seen the broadening of Māori health research knowledge. The HRC is committed to funding world class Māori health research and in doing so unlocking the potential of Māori knowledge, resources and people.² Through funding high quality research, the best possible outcomes for Māori health may be realised. The HRC is the most significant funder of Māori health research with opportunities for researchers at all levels from summer studentships and seeding grants to postdoctoral fellowships and programme grants. The HRC will explore other potential funding opportunities where possible. International partnerships with other indigenous communities provide an important research opportunity for Māori health researchers and provide a base from which to extend these partnerships further afield. Through providing funding across the spectrum of Māori health research the HRC seeks to create a body of knowledge that contributes to positive health outcomes for Māori and New Zealand.

Objectives:

- To fund quality Māori led health research
- To increase the scope and quantity of Māori health research
- To continue current international partnerships involving indigenous health research and explore new opportunities for partnerships
- To build an evidence base which contributes to improved Māori health outcomes.

Goal 2 Enhancing the application of Māori methodologies to health research

Mātauranga Māori offers many opportunities for researchers, both in applying kaupapa Māori methodologies³ and in undertaking research processes which value consultation and collaboration. The HRC has a role in creating a health research culture which values a Māori worldview. In practice this means incorporating Māori understandings of health and wellbeing and best practice in funding opportunities, application and assessment processes. It also involves promoting the use of kaupapa Māori methodologies. Funding opportunities and assessment processes require a level of flexibility to ensure that they are responsive to the varying needs of Māori communities. The HRC may draw on its international partners in indigenous health research to ensure health research processes meet internationally recognised standards.⁴

Objectives:

- To promote Māori notions of best practice in health research
- To promote the use of kaupapa Māori methodologies
- To use adaptable application and assessment frameworks which are responsive to the varying needs of Māori communities
- To participate in and support the development of internationally recognised standards for indigenous health research.

2. Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, (2005), *Vision Mātauranga*, Ministry of Research, Science and Technology.

3. Pūtaiora Writing Group, (2010), *Te Ara Tika - Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members*, HRC.

4. In 2002, the HRC, the Canadian Institute of Health Research and the National Health and Medical Research Council Australia, the national health agencies for each country, formed a partnership to support research in the area of indigenous peoples' health with the goal of improving the health of indigenous peoples in these three countries.

Goal 3 Translating research into Māori health gains

There is significant potential to improve the link between research findings and improved health outcomes. The Ministry of Health has prioritised whānau ora, emphasising the need for Māori families to achieve their maximum health and wellbeing.⁵ Building an evidence base of knowledge relating to Māori health and translating that knowledge into effective and appropriate health service delivery is essential if the Ministry's goal of whānau ora is to be achieved. Collaboration is a vital part of achieving gains in Māori health. This includes collaboration both within the research community, throughout the health sector including health providers and policy makers and the involvement of consumers and their whānau. The importance of innovative approaches to existing health needs is a growing area of interest for the HRC.

Objectives:

- To build a research evidence base which can be effectively translated into improved health outcomes for Māori and New Zealand
- To effectively communicate research findings to a range of audiences through ensuring researchers have appropriate dissemination strategies
- To progress the link between research and service delivery, policy and practice
- To provide opportunities for collaboration for those in all parts of the health and health research sector
- To promote the use of innovation in meeting the health needs of Māori.

Goal 4 Promoting Māori ethics processes and good practice

Tikanga Māori has made a valuable contribution to research both informally and formally. All health research needs to incorporate consideration of ethical dimensions, the cultural context and regulatory frameworks. The HRC is committed to ensure that researchers follow best practice ethical standards in all health research. Specifically relevant to Māori, the HRC has provided guidelines for researchers undertaking health research involving Māori and endeavours to promote the guidelines where possible. It is essential that all health research is responsive to the needs of Māori. This includes issues such as consultation, consent, involvement as researchers and dissemination. For improvements in Māori health to be widespread it is also important that research results are appropriately disseminated both to Māori communities and broader New Zealand society. There is a need for a forum to discuss ethical issues relevant to Māori. HRC's annual Hui Whakapiripiri and Pānui will continue to provide opportunities for such debates. The HRC has a role in the implementation of *Te Ara Tika - Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members*, and will work with the National Ethics Advisory Committee, Ministry of Health and Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga to support the effective implementation of the guidelines into policy and practice. The Māori Health Committee views increased dialogue between both the ethics committees and the Māori Health Committee on issues relevant to Māori health research as important.

Objectives:

- To promote ethical standards that reflect international good practice as well as ethical values and principles derived from Māori world views

5. Ministry of Health, (2002), *He Korowai Oranga*, (2002), Ministry of Health.
Ministry of Health, (2009), *Statement of Intent 2009-2012*, Ministry of Health.

- To ensure that health research values tikanga and is responsive to Māori needs and aspirations
- To ensure research results are appropriately reported back to Māori communities and broader New Zealand society
- To provide forums for discussion and debate on topical ethical issues
- To assist with the implementation of *Te Ara Tika - Guidelines for Māori Research Ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members*
- To encourage dialogue between ethics committees and the Māori Health Committee.

Goal 5 Extending the Māori health research workforce and promoting a culture of research

Māori health researchers are considered to be leaders in health research both nationally and internationally. Building the capacity and capability of the Māori health research workforce has been an ongoing goal for the HRC. A career development programme with research opportunities from summer studentships to postdoctoral fellowships has been extremely successful.⁶ The newly established Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund supports the building of capability in Māori health research. This fund focuses on developing skilled people and organisations to undertake research that supports the four themes of the Vision Mātauranga policy framework.⁷ The HRC is committed to continuing these opportunities recognising the important contribution the Māori health research workforce makes to Māori health gains. The importance of iwi, hapū, whānau and community involvement in health research both as researchers and in partnership with researchers is also recognised. The HRC is working to strengthen opportunities through Māori community initiated, led and focused research funding with a particular emphasis on community involvement and workforce development.

Objectives:

- To invest in the Māori health research workforce and build Māori health research capacity and capability
- To build a high quality skilled Māori health research workforce
- To promote Māori health research as a career and support a Māori health research career pathway
- To increase Māori led research and Māori involvement in research
- To encourage iwi, hapū, whānau, and Māori communities to identify their own research priorities and undertake research in their own communities
- To encourage partnerships between researchers and iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori communities.

6. *Māori Health Research Career Development Awards Career Paths Survey*, (2008), HRC.

7. Ministry of Research, Science and Technology, (2005), *Vision Mātauranga*, Ministry of Research, Science and Technology.

Goal 6 Strengthening the value of the HRC to respond to the needs of Māori for the benefit of New Zealand

Māori communities play a fundamental role in improving the health of their people. The HRC recognises the unique needs of Māori communities and is working to ensure that its policies and procedures are appropriate and responsive to Māori communities. The HRC is committed to presenting funding opportunities, administered by the HRC and other relevant government departments, to Māori health researchers and Māori communities at each of the HRC's roadshows and writing workshops held annually throughout the country. These roadshows and writing workshops will continue to meet demand and be enhanced where possible. In recent years the writing workshops have sparked a significant increase in the numbers and quality of applications submitted to the HRC. The HRC is also committed to continuing to hold regular hui as a forum for Māori health researchers to network and collaborate. Tailored publications such as *Pānui* will continue to be a means of communicating news and opportunities throughout the sector.

Objectives:

- To ensure the HRC undertakes its business in a way which is responsive to the needs of Māori communities
- To communicate funding opportunities appropriately to Māori communities through roadshows and writing workshops
- To provide opportunities for Māori health researchers to network, share and collaborate through forum such as Hui Whakapiripiri
- To expand the pool of funding available for Māori health research
- To better understand the impact of Māori health research on Māori health gain.

Mā te rangatiratanga me ngā tikanga Māori ngā rangahau hauora Māori e arahi

In 1856 tribal leaders throughout Aotearoa met at Pukawa on the banks of Lake Taupo to find solutions on how to address the perceived threats to their survival. The meeting was to become known as:

Hinana ki Uta
Hinana ki Tai

Search the Land
Search the Sea⁸

The intent of the HRC's Māori Health Committee remains committed to the same values of tikanga, rangatiratanga and rangahau demonstrated at this historical hui.

8. Gorst, J., (1864), *The Māori King*, Pauls Book Arcade and Oxford University Press, (1959 Reprint) Hamilton, Auckland, pp.54-55.