



STATEMENT OF INTENT

2020 - 2024

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Foreword from our chair

Kupu takamua nā te heamana

At the time of writing, the world is being transformed by SARS-COV-2, the virus causing the illness we have come to know as COVID-19. At the start of 2020, this virus was unknown to humankind. Yet, within weeks, the international research community had identified the virus, sequenced its DNA and was collaborating to develop vaccines. Longstanding investment in people, infrastructure and technology made this possible. After attending the WHO conference on SARS-COV-2 in Geneva in February 2020, our Chief Executive led the immediate partnering of the Health Research Council (HRC) and the Ministry of Health to invest 4 million in clinical trials and other research. Our health researchers responded strongly and instantly to the urgent call for proposals.

There has never been a better example of the importance of maintaining broad and strong health research capacity and capability. Doing so means we can respond to existing and emergent threats to human health. It means we can provide sound evidence and innovation to power the response of government, health services and health professionals. This is the job of the HRC and, in 2020, we recognise and celebrate thirty years of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand's health research sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic will affect our lives for years to come. We will need sound evidence of the effectiveness and fairness of our responses to be prepared for future health threats. As our world changes in other ways, we have an important role in preparing New Zealand to mitigate negative impacts on health.

Over the next four years, the HRC will focus more on responding to our changing world. We must take advantage of the numerous opportunities for the equitable distribution of

better health and wellbeing brought by advances in knowledge, technology and an evolving society. We expect to have more rapid-response calls in future, and are formalising an optimised process that can generate knowledge faster than ever before. We will try to accommodate the needs of our research providers as they meet the challenges that the pandemic presents. Our ability to deliver on goals in the timeframes we have committed to may be affected as a result of pressures on the research community, the government and the HRC itself. We will communicate with all our stakeholders as the situation unfolds.

The New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027 (NZHRS) has provided us with a vision for the New Zealand health research system, and the actions required to realise it. Our first action was to lead the development of the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (HRPF). The HRC's next focus is to align with that framework and further the research and infrastructure aims within it. We have already made significant progress on alignment with our New Zealand Health Delivery funding stream, as we work with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment to build the capacity of the health sector to engage in research.





The Health Research Council of New Zealand and their Chief Executive, from left: Professor Lesley McCowan (CNZM), Professor Vicky Cameron, Dr Will Barker, Professor Jeroen Douwes, Professor Parry Guilford, Tony Norman (MNZM, Deputy Chair), Dr Monique Faleafa (MNZM), Dr Alison Dewes, Professor Sunny Collings (Chief Executive), Professor Lester Levy (CNZM, Chair). Associate Professor Suzanne Pitama (Ngati Kahungunu, not pictured).

Our performance framework for the next four years articulates three key principles that sit behind everything we do, we aim to: advance Māori health and improve health equity; invest in ideas that will make the biggest difference, often at the frontier of what is known; and develop, sustain and connect the people and systems that will deliver the impact we aspire to.

We have a lot to do over the next four years but the way forward has never been more clear. This is our first Statement of Intent guided by a national strategy for health research, and driven by a cross-government approach. The Health and Disability Sector Review recommendations will require a strong evidence base for implementation, we must consider the outcomes of Waitangi Tribunal Health

Services and Outcomes Kaupapa Inquiry (Wai 2575), and we will have a new Research, Science and Innovation Strategy for New Zealand. We will lead the response of the health research sector in providing the evidence and innovations needed to deliver on this far-reaching national agenda.

Professor Lester Levy,
CNZM, Chair

Dr Will Barker,
Director

Executive summary | He whakarāpopotonga

Who we are | Ko wai mātou

- A Crown agent, founded through the HRC Act 1990.
- The principal government funder of health research.
- Accountable to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Research, Science and Innovation.

What we do | Ā mātou mahi

- Lead the New Zealand health research sector, building and enhancing national and international connections with a broad range of stakeholders.
- Invest in excellent research proposed by our best health researchers, or requested by the HRC to address urgent needs or important knowledge gaps.
- Partner with New Zealand stakeholders to maximise research impact and return on investment, and address cross-sectoral issues.
- Partner with international agencies to link New Zealand researchers with global research efforts, increase international research collaborations and gain access to international expertise and resources.
- Strengthen the health research workforce, focusing on capacity and capability for Māori, Pacific and health delivery research.
- Provide regulatory functions and advice to government that keep the system ethical and safe.

Our aspiration for New Zealand health research | Ko tō mātou hiahia



mō te rangahau haoura i
Aotearoa

Every New Zealander enjoys equitable improvements in health and wellbeing because of evidence and innovations from our world-leading health research system.

The three strategic drivers of everything we do to meet our aspiration | Ko ngā ūpoko matua e toru e noho ana hei tūāpapa ki ō mātou wawata katoa



Fostering excellence and innovation



Increasing engagement and connection



Strengthening skills and systems

Beneath each driver are three priorities that form our goals

| Ko ngā whakaarotau e hua ai ngā ūpoko matua



Promoting innovation and impact



Advancing Māori health



Improving health equity

Our intentions for the next four years | Kō ō mātou aronga matua mō ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei

Across all our strategic drivers

- Advance our goals and our Ministers' priorities, including a strong and equitable health delivery system, child health, mental health, improved wellbeing through primary care, and promoting diversity.
- Implement Actions 2-4 of the New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027, which focus on Māori health, more equitable outcomes for Pacific peoples and a strong health research workforce.
- Align with the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework.
- Support implementation of the findings of the Health and Disability Sector Review.

Fostering excellence and innovation

(Investigator-led research through our annual funding rounds)

- Support excellent research that addresses key knowledge needs, expands the boundaries of knowledge and leads to better health and wellbeing outcomes, along with commercial innovations.
- Partner with Māori to advance Māori health and develop unique and innovative approaches.
- Focus on knowledge needed to reduce health and social inequities.
- Increase investment in Pacific-led health research, methodologies and solutions.
- Invest more in addressing and preparing for the health impacts of our changing world, such as climate change, air, soil and water pollution, pandemics, and conditions caused or worsened by how we live, work and relax.
- Provide opportunities for health professionals and DHBs to actively engage in health research.

Increasing engagement and connection

(Mission-led research, our Partnership Programme and International Programme)

- Work across government to address health inequities and 'one-health' challenges.
- Partner to address the challenges of COVID-19.
- Enhance connections between New Zealand researchers and the global research effort.

Strengthening skills and systems

(Our career development programme, our processes and our ethics and regulatory functions)

- Support excellent people to gain research skills and advance a research career.
- Build diversity in the research workforce.
- Work with Māori to co-design research systems.
- Develop a rapid-response investment process.
- Continue to provide ethics and regulatory advice and functions that keep New Zealand research safe.

About the HRC | Mō HRC

Who we are | Ko wai mātou

The Health Research Council (HRC) is the home of health and wellbeing research in New Zealand. We are the Crown agent responsible for the majority of government funding for health research, leading the health research sector, investing in areas of greatest need and opportunity, and setting rigorous investment standards. We work closely across government sectors to deliver the best possible value for every dollar spent on providing the capability, capacity and evidence needed to improve equitable health and wellbeing outcomes for New Zealanders.

We were created through the Health Research Council Act 1990. Our Council comprises ten people with expertise in health research and the health, business and innovation sectors. The HRC team is highly qualified and experienced, on average staying with the organisation for seven years. Flexible working hours and a family-friendly environment means that we have around forty people delivering the hours of thirty full-time staff. Our Council and our staff bring considerable diversity to our decision-making and our operations. See our Annual Report for detailed information about our staff, organisation and policies.

We strive to meet the principles, opportunities and obligations of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and to achieve a standard where Māori identify as partners and co-designers of the services we provide and the

research we deliver. We value diversity of people and perspectives as integral to a vibrant and transformative research process, from funding to implementation.

We work hard to uphold our organisational values: integrity, transparency, commitment and courage. These values guide us as we work towards our aspiration that every New Zealander will enjoy equitable improvements in health and wellbeing because of evidence and innovations from our world-leading health research system.

What we do | Ā mātou mahi

We invest around \$120 million each year in the health research New Zealand needs, and the diverse and skilled workforce required to do it. Through about 600 current contracts at any one time, we provide over 3000 opportunities for health research and training in New Zealand, that draw in expert investigators from over 30 different countries.

Our research investments are driven by research proposals from New Zealand's brightest scientists in response to our published priorities (investigator-led) and requests for proposals that we issue on specific topics (mission-led). Our mission-led investments allow us to mount a rapid response to urgent issues and address important knowledge needs that are not otherwise being met. Through our Partnership Programme, we partner with stakeholders and other funders to increase the utility and scale of research, and share resources and ideas. We also work across government sectors, in recognition of the way that health intersects with all of them, impacted by social issues, housing, justice, our environment, transport, and many more.

We are committed to building knowledge and evidence on issues that affect New Zealanders the most, both now, across generations, and into the

We work across government sectors because health intersects with all of them, impacted by social issues, housing, justice, transport, the environment and many more.

future. As well as addressing the needs of New Zealand's diverse population, our researchers are tackling global issues of urgency here in New Zealand and in collaboration with scientists around the world. Through our International Programme, we partner with funders overseas to create opportunities for New Zealand researchers to connect with and contribute to international research efforts and expertise.

Improvement in the quality of healthcare is largely dependent on research evidence. We use our funding calls to drive the innovation, translation and implementation that will bring sustainable and equitable improvements in our health system.

A key responsibility for us is to recruit, train, attract and retain the best health researchers, to create a diversity of people, skills and perspectives in our research community. We are the only agency in New Zealand running dedicated health research training programmes across the career spectrum for Māori and Pacific peoples.

Our career development programme also has a strong focus on growing and sustaining health research by training health professionals to engage in research, providing opportunities for mid-career researchers and developing emerging research leaders. Our opportunities for health professionals allow them to gain research training, focus on advancing established research careers and develop health policy.

The HRC plays a pivotal role in ensuring New Zealand health research is ethical and safe, through our ethics and regulatory committees. The HRC Ethics Committee accredits all the institutional ethics committees in New Zealand and provides advice on ethical issues to government and the research community. We advise the government on health research policy and investment and the safety of innovations involving gene technologies and clinical trials involving new medicines.



The documents that guide us | Te pūrongo ka noho mai hei tūāpapa

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

As a Crown agency, the HRC acknowledges Māori as tāngata whenua and partners with the Crown. We aspire to all our investments, policies and systems upholding the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This means the design and implementation of our calls for research proposals, and our assessment and investment processes must be culturally safe and appropriate. We must facilitate equitable access to funding (or actively remove barriers to access), and to the benefits of funding. We must engage with Māori and empower Māori communities to be actively involved in investment and policy decision-making on matters that affect them.

Our understanding of the importance and value of mātauranga Māori in shaping and ensuring the future prosperity of our nation underpins our research and career development opportunities, our national and international partnerships and our criteria for investment. The HRC's Māori Health Research Committee is a statutory committee, advising the Council on all aspects of policy and funding, and the Council's obligations and opportunities under Te Tiriti.

All research and career development proposals submitted to the HRC's Māori-specific funding rounds are assessed exclusively by reviewers with expertise in Māori health, through Māori health assessing committees that operate under the guidance of the Māori Health Committee. Where research or career development proposals focused on Māori health are submitted to the general funding rounds, the HRC endeavours to ensure that appropriate Māori health expertise is included in the peer review and assessment of those applications. The introduction of the Māori Health Advancement criterion, which will be included in all investment mechanisms when fully implemented, will mean that all research applications will include assessment by reviewers with expertise in Māori health.

The Health Research Council Act 1990

The HRC Act 1990 sets out clear functions for the HRC. Put simply, our principal functions are to:

1. Advise the Minister of Health on national health research policy and commission research to implement it.
2. Negotiate funding for health research from the government every 3 years.
3. Foster the national health research workforce, recruiting, training, and retaining researchers.
4. Both support researchers with good ideas and initiate research in areas considered high priority.
5. Consult widely when setting the priorities for health research, including with our Ministers, the District Health Boards, stakeholders, and consumers.
6. Ensure that all our committees use appropriate assessment standards.

The full list of the HRC's functions under the Act can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

The HRC has four statutory committees under the Act, the Māori Health Committee; the Biomedical Research Committee; the Public Health Research Committee and the Ethics Committee. These committees provide essential advice and services to the Council on the policy, funding and ethics of health research in New Zealand. In addition, the Council has established a number of standing committees. One of these is the Pacific Health Research Committee, with the mandate to provide advice and support for Pacific health research and training, and to ensure the expertise to assess Pacific-led health research and training proposals. A full list of all the HRC committees and their functions is available on the HRC website (<https://www.hrc.govt.nz>).

The New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017 - 2027

The New Zealand Health Research Strategy (NZHRS) is the country's first national strategy for health research. It is unprecedented because it was jointly published by MBIE and the Ministry of Health, and the HRC worked with both ministries to develop it. The strategy brings the three agencies together to collaboratively implement ten actions. These are designed to realise the vision of a world-leading research and innovation system that, through excellent research, improves the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders. The HRC is responsible for leading four of these actions with the support of the Ministry of Health and MBIE:

- **ACTION 1:** requires the HRC to work with all health research consumers and stakeholders to set national health research priorities for New Zealand. This culminated in the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework, published in December 2019.
- **ACTION 2:** sets out the ways that the HRC will work with Māori stakeholders to strengthen Hauora Māori research and workforce, develop guidance to ensure that New Zealand health research is responsive to Māori and support the

non-Māori workforce to improve Māori health, and reflect the principles of Vision Mātauranga and He Korowai Oranga in funding mechanisms.

- **ACTION 3:** provides a continued focus on building Pacific health research leadership, capability and capacity through ring-fenced funding (the HRC created ring-fenced funding for Pacific research in 2017), increasing Pacific representation on relevant governing bodies, undertaking a stocktake of Pacific knowledge and linking Pacific health research across the Pacific region.
- **ACTION 4:** charges the HRC with continuing to develop and sustain a strong health research workforce in key areas, mapping workforce training with research areas over time.

Much of our work over the next four years will be focused on implementing the NZHRS, as we lead our actions and engage with the Ministry of Health and MBIE to progress theirs. Over the next four years, we will align with the the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (Action 1) and work towards implementation of the other three actions. There is a strong focus on implementation of the strategy under each of our three strategic drivers ([see page 19](#)).



The New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework

The New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (HRPF) sets four domains for government health research investment in New Zealand, each with specific research and infrastructure aims. Five research attributes are also set: Why in New Zealand?; Mana Tāngata; Excellence, Impact, and Equity. These attributes are intended to change the way that research is designed, conducted and funded, so that all government funded health research advances priorities for New Zealand. These attributes will ensure that we fund research that needs to be done in New Zealand and is appropriate for our New Zealand context - advancing Māori by upholding and valuing Māori rights, worldviews and knowledge, tikanga Māori (Māori processes and protocol), and by addressing inequity in health outcomes. The attributes also provide us with a definition for excellent research to guide investment, and parameters for ensuring impact and equitable outcomes from the research that we fund. The HRPF is available from the HRC website: www.hrc.govt.nz.

When referring to excellence in our aspiration and goals for HRC investment, we are using the definition set out in the HRPF:

- Excellent research is ethical, scientifically sound, novel, well-designed, well-performed and well-reported.

How will the HRC be aligning?

The HRC has already begun the process of alignment. We are redesigning the New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Stream, so that it delivers better to the aims of the HRPF Domain 2: People-Centred Healthcare, and supports implementation of the NZHRS actions on creating a vibrant research environment in the health sector and strengthening pathways for translation that the Ministry of Health is leading. Over the next four years, we will be evaluating these changes and determining the appropriate mechanisms and level of investment going forward.

We will review all our funding mechanisms and processes in 2020/2021, to ensure optimal alignment with the HRPF. The changes we make must be well-considered, sustainable and enduring. Once the review is complete, the HRC will inform the research community well in advance of any intended changes and the availability of new funding opportunities.

Other key government strategies

The HRC is guided by a number of government strategies, some shown on the following page with our strategic drivers and the values that are at the foundation of all we do. We align to national strategies for health and wellbeing, such as the [New Zealand Health Strategy](#), the [New Zealand Disability Strategy](#) and [He Korowai Oranga](#), and we ensure that our broad portfolio of investments is delivering the evidence needed to further the goals outlined in these documents. The way that we align to the New Zealand Health Strategy is best described in the NZHRS, and the relevant extract is provided in [Appendix 3](#). The draft [Research, Science and Innovation Strategy: Mata Ki Te Rangi](#) has guided the development of our performance framework and the strong themes of excellence, impact and connection that pervade every aspect of it. The [Vision Mātauranga](#) strategy has shaped our approach to Māori health advancement through research since 2007, and all of the contracts funded through our main funding round are reviewed for how they deliver to it.

The [Child and Youth Wellbeing Strategy](#) sets ambitious goals to reduce child poverty and mitigate the impacts of poverty and socio-economic disadvantage. The wellbeing of children and youth is already a priority for the HRC, with a particular focus on mental health, and we will be focusing on providing the evidence and the research capability that will be needed to meet these goals. Working across sectors will be important to developing better understanding of the issues and effective interventions, alongside holistic and comprehensive approaches.

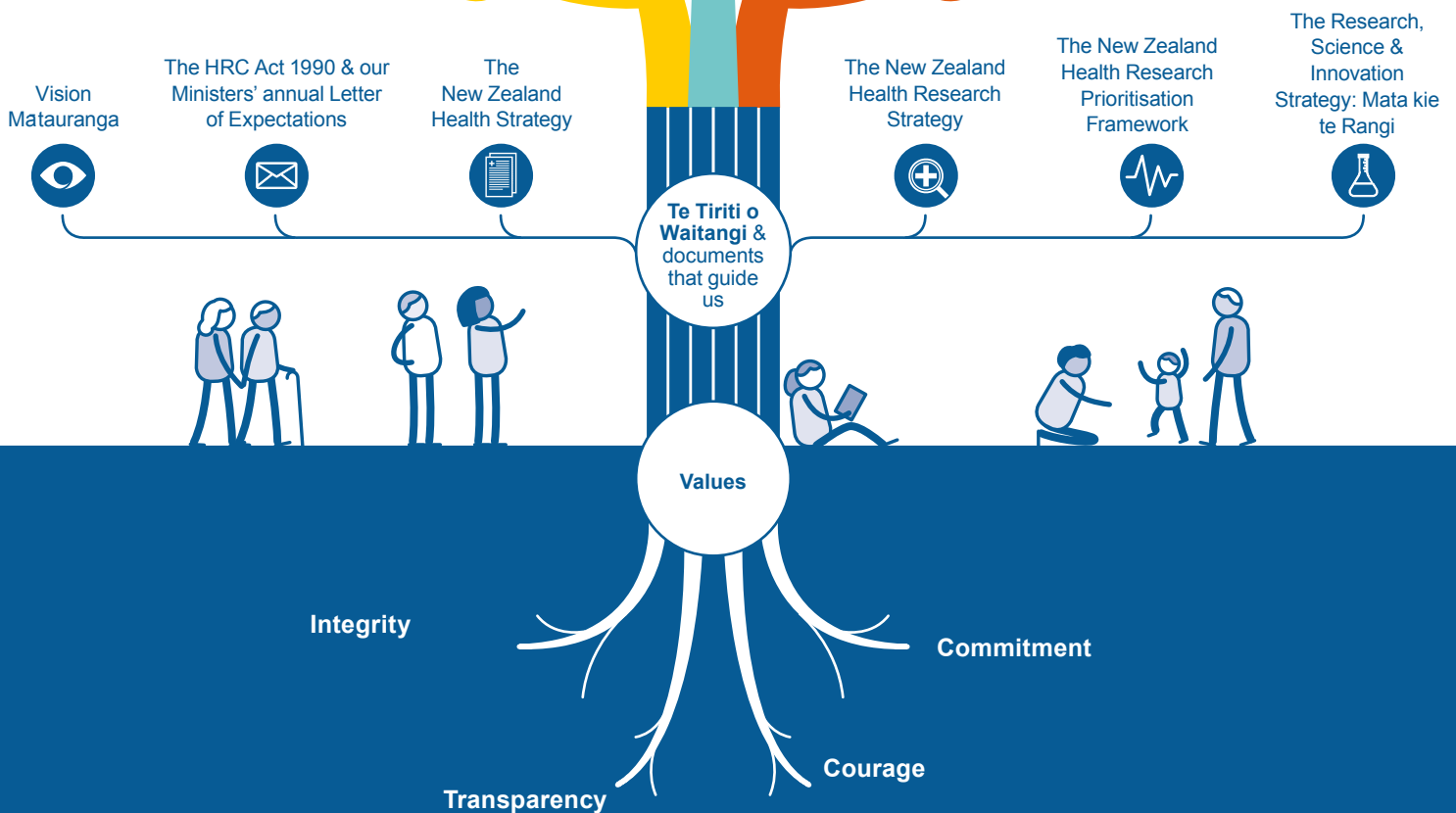
The key elements of the HRC's performance framework

Our aspiration: Every New Zealander enjoys equitable improvements in health and wellbeing because of evidence and innovations from our world-leading health research system.

Strategic Driver:
**Strengthening
skills and systems**

Strategic Driver:
**Fostering
excellence and
innovation**

Strategic Driver:
**Connecting for
greater impact**



Our accountability and funding

| Ngā takawaengatanga me ngā tahua pūtea

The HRC is a Crown agent and so is required to give effect to government policy. The HRC is accountable to two Ministers, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Research, Science and Innovation, who work together to provide us with direction. A memorandum of understanding outlines how the two Ministers work together to oversee the HRC. The HRC was created through the Health Research Council Act (1990), which made the Minister of Health our responsible Minister. Vote Health provides the funding for the ethics and regulatory functions that the HRC performs. However, the parliamentary appropriation of funding for the HRC comes from Vote Business, Science and Innovation (BSI) as BSI: Health Research Fund. This means that the Minister of Research, Science and Innovation (RSI) has the responsibility for monitoring HRC spending to ensure it is in line with appropriation requirements and the broader strategies and priorities set for the New Zealand health research and science and innovation sectors.

The Minister of RSI additionally devolves Vote BSI funding to the HRC for international research initiatives (from the Catalyst Fund) and for furthering the goals of Vision Mātauranga (from the Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund). The devolved funds are subject to the policies developed by the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) for investment of these funds.

Appendix 1 provides a list of the reports that the HRC regularly produces to comply with requirements from both Ministers, as well as our obligations under the Crown Entities Act. In addition to these reports, our Ministers expect that the HRC will inform them of any issue that is likely to represent a potential risk to the government, as soon as it is possible to do so.



What is expected of us | Ō mātou haipapa

What our Ministers expect | Ngā wawata o ō tātou Minita

In 2020, our Ministers communicated the following expectations to the HRC:

- We will lead the health research sector in providing the research evidence and the research workforce required to underpin consistent and sustained efforts to achieve [equity of health outcomes, and equitable access to health services](#).
- We will drive the research needed to realise the government's vision of a [strong and equitable health and disability system](#) and implement the relevant, research-related recommendations of the Health and Disability System Review.
- We will [consider the needs of the wider research and innovation system](#), as well as delivering to the [Research, Science and Innovation Strategy: Mata ki te Rangi, and the New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027](#). This includes working in collaboration with the National Science Challenges and the Centres for Research Excellence, where their work intersects with health and we can add value by doing so.
- We will ensure that health research advances [healthy futures for Māori](#), focus on Māori partnership and co-innovation, work with iwi and Māori communities, and ensure that we honour Māori-Crown Treaty obligations.
- We will contribute to the government goals of an [inclusive, sustainable and productive New Zealand](#) and recognise that health research has a crucial role to play in generating new ideas and innovations.

- We will [work with universities to grow the pipeline of research talent](#), and pay particular attention to the diversity of the research teams that we fund, our committees and the HRC itself. In doing this, we will align with the government's [Diversity in Science Statement](#).
- We will [increase research intensity in health service delivery](#) working directly with District Health Boards and those working in front-line care to develop the knowledge and systems needed for a co-ordinated and directed approach to health services.

Our Ministers also have expectations around [responsible management of our finances and reserves](#), which require us to ensure that public funds are spent as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Our Ministers signal their expectations through an annual letter and through the development of national strategies and policies with which the HRC aligns. We address how we are responding to our Ministers' annual expectations in our Statement of Performance Expectations and our Annual Report.

Focusing on current and future wellbeing | E aro ana ki te inamata me te anamata

The government expects the public sector to focus on current and future wellbeing and incorporate a wellbeing approach in their external planning and performance reporting. The HRC has used Treasury's Living Standards Framework (LSF) as a tool to report on how our investments are advancing current and future wellbeing. The LSF considers four kinds of capital as underpinning our ability to improve wellbeing. The [figure on page 16](#) shows how the HRC is delivering to each.

The 12 domains of social wellbeing illustrate why the HRC's drive to take a cross-sectoral approach to health research is so crucial to our long-term strategy to increase wellbeing. Building our Partnership Programme will enable us to advance this work more quickly, and so is strongly reflected in our planning for the next four years. Our investment in longitudinal studies helps us to understand these interactions now, and across generations.

The HRC's Sustainability Framework

In July 2019, we launched our new Sustainability Framework¹, which formalises the HRC's existing commitment to and actions for a sustainable New Zealand and sets out our sustainability commitments through to 2024. The framework responds to the Government's priority to address, mitigate and adapt to the effects of climate change. We are committed to demonstrating our leadership in the health sector, and an increasingly environmentally conscious science, research and innovation system, by ensuring that we are an environmentally and socially responsible organisation.

The health of our people cannot be separated from the health of our environment. Sustainability for the HRC means leading with integrity to improve outcomes for the environment of New Zealand and the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders.

The framework is organised around three strategic aims:

- *Ā mātou tāngata*, our people: To create a culture of organisational sustainability and a workforce of environmental champions and stewards.
- *O mātou whare*, our place: To create a work environment that enhances the wellbeing of HRC staff and minimises our impact on the environment.
- *Ā mātou tikanga*, our policies and procedures: To become an environmental leader within the sector through a whole-systems approach to sustainability and sharing best practice.

Within each aim we make sustainability commitments to guide the HRC's actions. In September 2019, the HRC engaged Toitū to assist with certification for the measurement, management and mitigation of our carbon emissions, including business travel, electricity and vehicles. The Toitū certification is internationally recognised and accredited. Under the programme, the HRC will be independently audited annually to inform our management plans and support a cycle of continual reduction. We are committed to reporting publicly on our progress.

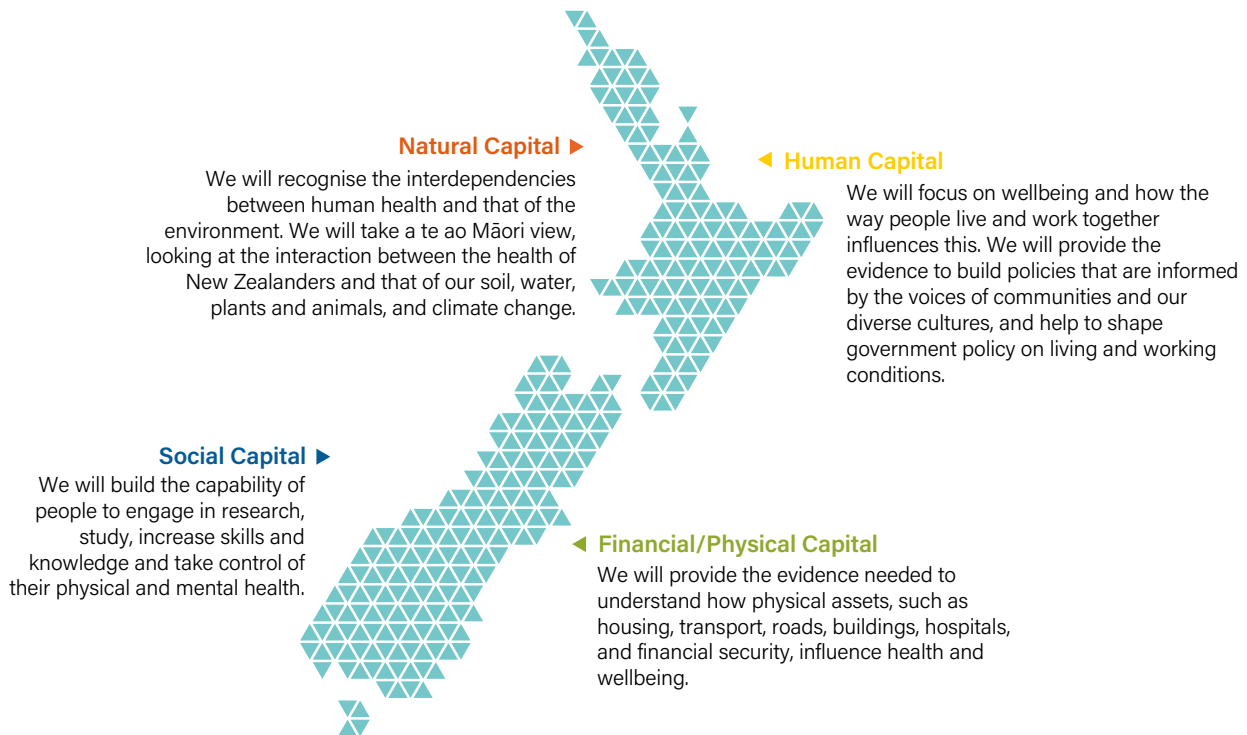
What the public expects

New Zealanders expect that they will have access to the latest advances in diagnostics, treatments, rehabilitation and palliative care. They expect that all members of our society will have equitable access to the care and resources of a world-class health system. They trust that care and decisions about the allocation of resources will be based on the best available evidence. They expect that the HRC will prioritise the issues that are important to them, and spend public funds wisely. Ultimately, the public expects that the government's investment in health research will contribute to a real and enduring improvement in their health and wellbeing. We will continue our work to make all of these expectations a reality.

The many domains of social wellbeing in the Treasury's Living Standards Framework illustrate why a cross-sectoral approach is crucial to the HRC.

The difference we will make

How the HRC will contribute to improving future wellbeing in New Zealand, framed by the Treasury's Living Standards Framework.



The twelve Domains of current wellbeing (below) all influence health through an intricate web of socioeconomic determinants and we will work across government sectors to understand the impact of these interactions on current and future generations.



¹ Available on the HRC website at: <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2020-03/HRC%20Sustainability%20Framework.pdf>

Where we fit in the health research sector

| Te wāhanga e noho ai ā tātou mahi rangahau

The HRC operates in a complex environment in which there are many contributors to the national health research effort. We are one of six Crown agents/entities reporting to the Minister of Health, the others being PHARMAC, the Health Quality and Safety Commission, the New Zealand Blood Service, the Health Promotion Agency and the Health and Disability Commissioner.

Government ministries frequently invest directly in health-related research. This includes the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry for the Environment. Through our Partnership Programme, we have worked with these ministries to address cross-sectoral research issues. The Ministry of Health is our principal funding partner through the Partnership Programme, and works closely with us on meeting the research needs of the health sector.

The Minister of Research, Science and Innovation also monitors and funds a number of Crown Entities (in addition to the HRC) with which we maintain a relationship, including ACC, Callaghan Innovation and some of the Crown Research Institutes (CRIs). MBIE's contestable and negotiated science investments can be in the realm of health, and MBIE additionally funds and monitors the National Science Challenges and the Marsden Fund administered by the Royal Society Te Apārangi (RSNZ). The Marsden Fund provides strong support for more fundamental health research. We work closely with MBIE and RSNZ, meeting to discuss best practice, processes, issues and strategies and ensure good communication and alignment. CRIs focusing on the environment, climate, food production and agriculture, such as ESR, Crop and Food, AgResearch and NIWA, are strongly linked to the health research effort - both directly through the focus of the research and indirectly through sharing technology, methods and ideas across research sectors.

The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) funds the Centres of Research Excellence (CoREs), and health research at the tertiary education institutions, through the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF). The universities themselves, support a significant amount of health research through the PBRF and philanthropic donations and are the main providers of health research in New Zealand, and for the HRC. The universities also host critical resources and infrastructure, such as the New Zealand Brain Bank, and New Zealand's longitudinal studies.

Many District Health Boards have research offices and are engaged in health research, much driven through joint appointments of health professionals with university medical schools. Entities such as the Health Innovation Hub and clinical trials networks are also vital components of New Zealand's health research machine. New Zealand has a strong clinical trials sector and infrastructure initiatives such as the Australia New Zealand Clinical Trials Registry (ANZCTR) to support it. The HRC has funded the ANZCTR since it was established in 2005.

The HRC also currently supports four Independent Research Organisations (IROs) in the field of health research: the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research, the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand, Te Atawhai o te Ao: Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health and Whakauae

Research Services Limited. These IROs have received specific funding dedicated to providing stability for them to grow capacity and capability since 2014.

When viewed together, there is a significant annual contribution to health research from the Lottery Health Research Committee and non-government organisations and philanthropic organisations around New Zealand, estimated to be in the region of \$40 million per annum. These include Cure Kids, Breast Cancer New Zealand, the Heart Foundation, the Cancer Society, the Neurological Foundation, and medical research foundations. Some philanthropic organisations fund their own research facilities, such as the Auckland Cancer Society Research Centre and the Malaghan Institute, and these centres often successfully compete for HRC funding.

New Zealanders for Health Research is a public education and advocacy alliance committed to making health research a higher priority in New Zealand. There are currently 17 members in the alliance, which includes tertiary institutions, drug companies, private healthcare providers and charities. The HRC is not a member of the alliance but benefits from their regular surveys of public opinion on health research priorities and efforts to co-ordinate the sector.

It is the HRC's role to provide leadership, co-ordination and connection for this large and diverse health research sector. Wherever possible we partner with ministries, non-government and philanthropic organisations to add value to their investments and provide access to our robust processes and large international pool of scientific reviewers and expertise. We maintain close links

to the health-related National Science Challenges and the CoREs, who are also research partners and funding recipients, to maximise impact from government investment. We maintain a close dialogue with other funding agencies, collaborating on policies and strategies, aligning our processes and avoiding duplication wherever possible. Having led the development of the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework, it is also our role to work with MBIE and the Ministry of Health to ensure all government investment is guided by the framework, and to work with our many health service stakeholders to support them in implementing it.

It is the HRC's role to provide leadership, co-ordination and connection to a diverse health research sector. Having developed the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework, we have a role to work with MBIE and the Ministry of Health to ensure all government investment is guided by it.

Our drivers and goals for the next four years

Ngā whakaawenga me ngā whāinga mō ngā tau e whā e haere ake nei

Our aspiration

Every New Zealander enjoys equitable improvements in health and wellbeing because of evidence and innovations from our world-leading health research system. | Kia rongo ai ngā kainoho katoa o Aotearoa i ngā hua o te hauora me te waiora nā ngā taunakitanga me ngā auahatanga e puta mai ana i tā mātou pūnaha rangahau hauora.

Our contribution

We lead the health research sector, developing a skilled and diverse workforce and investing in excellent research to improve wellbeing and health equity. | Kei mua kē tātou i te ahumahi rangahau hauora, e whanake ana i tētahi ao mahi matatau, kanorau hoki, ā, e penapena ana hoki i te rangahau kounga e pai ake ai te tōkeke waiora, hauora hoki.

Our drivers



Fostering excellence and innovation

E morimori ana i te kounga me te auaha

We **invest in the best ideas and innovations** proposed by New Zealand's brightest researchers, designed to improve equitable outcomes and make a tangible difference to the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Our goals

- Invest in excellent research for innovation and impact
- Advance Māori health through excellent research
- Improve health equity through excellent research.

(Activities funded through HRC Output 1: Fostering excellence and innovation)



Connecting for greater impact

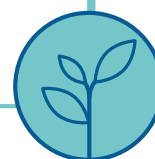
Mā te mahi tahi e hua nui ai

We align and **connect funders, providers and users** of health research in New Zealand, **form strategic research partnerships** to address priority health issues, and **build strong links to international research** efforts.

Our goals

- Connect for innovation and impact
- Advance Māori health through meaningful partnerships
- Improve health equity through engaging across government and the health sector.

(Activities funded through HRC Output 2: Connecting for greater impact)



Strengthening skills and systems

E whakapakari ana i ngā pūkenga me ngā pūnaha

We **develop and sustain the people, processes and systems** required to deliver the ethical, excellent, innovative and impactful research New Zealand needs.

Our goals

- Invest in people and systems for innovation and impact
- Advance Māori health through building research capacity and capability
- Improve health equity through investment in a diverse research workforce.

(Activities funded through HRC Output 3: Strengthening skills and growing a diverse workforce and Output 4: Keeping the health research system ethical and safe)



Fostering excellence and innovation

| E morimori ana i te kounga me te auaha

We invest in the best ideas and innovations proposed by New Zealand's brightest researchers, designed to improve equitable outcomes and make a tangible difference to the health and wellbeing of New Zealanders.

Our Goals

- Invest in excellent research for innovation and impact
- Advance Māori health through excellent research
- Improve health equity through excellent research.

Our Tools

- The annual publication of our research priorities, which align with the strategies and priorities set by government (including the Health Research Prioritisation Framework, HRPF).

Why is this important?

When excellent, high-impact health research is done in New Zealand, it benefits us in many ways. Health services become tailored to the needs of our unique population and access to them improves for everyone. Services are delivered by health professionals in possession of the latest knowledge, enriching their practice through asking the right questions and engaging in the research needed to answer them. The flow of fundamental knowledge powers our medical innovations sector and benefits both our health and the economy.

Having a strong health research sector means that we can respond rapidly to major threats to human health, such as COVID-19. We cannot simply import solutions sought overseas because our population, societal structures, and environment are unique. Whilst we can contribute to, benefit from and build on the global research effort, we urgently need home-grown knowledge and solutions and

the ability to generate these rapidly, as situations evolve.

The knowledge, methods and innovations generated by New Zealand's Māori researchers and thought-leaders are crucial in shaping New Zealand's health, social and commercial sectors, and generating a wealth of benefits for indigenous people and governments the world over. This research is unique to New Zealand and not only indispensable to us as a nation, but one of our key strengths. New Zealand health research has the ability to contribute to Māori advancement in a multitude of ways, including addressing inequities in health, benefiting individuals, whānau, communities, and organisations, strengthening the health research workforce and improving health and research literacy.

An urgent priority for health research in New Zealand must be achieving health equity, providing the levers needed to alter the outcomes and raise the expectations of those that our system can serve better. It is through active participation of communities and stakeholders in the research process, rather than simply conducting research in a community setting, that we will gain the knowledge and interventions needed to drive the required changes.

Our focus for the next four years

We have clear directions for New Zealand health research provided by our Ministers' expectations, the New Zealand Health Research Strategy and the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (HRPF). Our major focus will be

furthering those aims. At the forefront of our agenda will be garnering the knowledge needed to reduce health and social inequities in this country. Key to this will be working in partnership with Māori to advance Māori health and build on the opportunities that mātauranga Māori affords New Zealand to create unique and innovative approaches, resources and solutions. Supporting the aspirations and priorities of the Māori health research community is also important for Māori to realise mana motuhake in respect to their health and independence.

We will continue to build investment in Pacific health research and support Pacific researchers to develop and draw on the Pacific knowledge, methodologies and approaches that are urgently needed, and will benefit everyone.

Increasing the capacity and capability to conduct research in health sector organisations will be a key objective. We will work closely with the Ministry of Health and MBIE to further the Actions of the New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027, and tailor the type and scope of funding opportunities that we offer to current and future needs. We aim to support the excellent research already happening in health delivery settings, while equally enabling new research pathways, from establishing the evidence need, meeting that need, and on to translation of findings into policy and practice.

Through our Health Delivery Research Investment Round, we will build capability over and above the opportunities offered through our career development programme (see page 29), through a people-focused pipeline providing grants to those delivering front-line care. We will evaluate the effectiveness of the changes that we have made to this funding mechanism, as we partner with DHBs to increase their ability to drive the research agenda and provide more opportunities for health professionals to gain research training and engage in research.

We will invest more on preparing for what's coming – the challenges our world and our country face due

to climate change, natural disasters, our shifting population, future threats and pandemics, rapid changes in technology and ready availability of vast amounts of data. The pandemics we are facing include major increases in physical and mental conditions affected by stress and changes in how we live, work and relax. Many of these challenges are already affecting New Zealand communities today, and we will foster our growing portfolio of research investments geared towards planning for, reducing and eliminating adverse impacts. Part of this will be promoting connection between research teams and the communities that they serve, for effective and equitable solutions. We will also be poised to exploit the many advantages that a changing world and an evolving society will bring to enhance health and wellbeing, such as advances in technology, knowledge, and data information systems. In doing all of this, we will draw on a wealth of disciplines, methodologies and world-views to seek ideas and solutions - some of which may currently be inconceivable.

We will continue to invest in longitudinal studies, as they form part of the science backbone - the essential infrastructure of the RS&I system. They generate crucial data that directly informs key health and policy settings over the course of generations, allowing us to see the intergenerational nature of key health determinants and the interaction between our genes and our environment.

We will support the world-class applied and fundamental research that addresses important knowledge needs and fuels innovations – across all disciplines. Our investments will build on research strengths and areas of global advantage, expanding the boundaries of knowledge and contributing to global advances. Some of this investment will generate health innovations that will improve treatment and boost the economy. We will review the success of our collaboration with the Commercial Partner Network in smoothing the pathway from HRC investment in the underpinning research to commercialisation of an innovation, through increasing engagement and connection at the level of the funders.

Our performance targets

The outlook in 2020	What we need to develop/grow	What we will deliver by 2024
<p>The New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework (HRPF) to guide government investment in health research has just been published by the HRC, the Ministry of Health and MBIE. The HRC is one of the agencies that must align with the HRPF.</p>	<p>We need to ensure that our research investments further the Research Aims of the HRPF.</p>	<p>2020/21 – 2023/24: We will track how our investments are delivering to the research aims of the HRPF annually, through mapping all of our investments against them.</p>
<p>Building on the successful implementation of Action 1 of the NZHRS (the HRPF), the HRC, the Ministry of Health and MBIE plan for implementation of Action 2: Invest in research for healthy futures for Māori.</p>	<p>We need to work alongside Māori stakeholders to develop Māori health research priorities, develop guidance on how to ensure research with Māori is responsive and appropriately conducted, and evaluate the effectiveness of our current funding arrangements for research that advances Māori health.</p>	<p>By 2024: Our investments will be guided by the Māori health research priorities generated through implementing Action 2 of the NZHRS.</p>
<p>We are providing opportunities for health professionals to engage in research, and targeting investment to health delivery. The HRPF has set research and infrastructure priorities to further the goals of Domain 2: People-Centred Healthcare.</p>	<p>Our New Zealand Health Delivery Research Investment Round has not provided the level of investment in health delivery research that we had hoped. We are piloting a redesigned scheme in 2020, with both project-focused and people-focused pipelines.</p>	<p>By 2024: Our pilot scheme will have been reviewed and any necessary changes identified will be made, to maximise the effect of new opportunities in increasing investment in health delivery research and the translation and uptake of that research in clinical practice.</p>

Key annual performance indicators and targets for our work related to investment in research and priority-setting will be reported in our Statement of Performance Expectations under Output 1: Fostering excellence and innovation.



Connecting for greater impact

| Mā te mahi tahi e hua nui ai

We align and connect funders, providers and users of health research in New Zealand, form strategic research partnerships to address priority health issues, and build strong links to international research efforts.

Our Goals

- Connecting for research, innovation and impact
- Advancing Māori health through partnership
- Achieving health equity through engaging across government.

Our Tools

- Our Partnership Programme, and the connections with numerous national health research stakeholders forged through it
- Our national relationships, connections and memberships, including the New Zealand Health Research Strategy (NZHRS) Implementation Steering and Working Groups
- Our International Programme; our International Research Advisory Board; membership of global alliances (the Global Alliance on Chronic Diseases and E-Asia); membership of Heads of International Research Organisations, and research agreements with government agencies in China, the European Union, Canada and Australia.

Why is this important?

The HRC has a central role to play in leading co-ordination and collaboration across the health research system. Building better connections and communication will be key to achieving the goal of a health research sector that is working together towards shared aims. By partnering directly with our stakeholders, we can deliver to their needs outside of annual funding cycles and speed the uptake of knowledge. We can span sectors to weave the many and disparate strands of health

determinants into the fabric of our solutions. Whilst our national partnerships enhance research, speed translation and reduce duplication and waste, our international partnerships are also crucial. New Zealand researchers make a major contribution to knowledge on global health issues. Through partnering with international agencies, we can support new collaborations and access to international facilities and high-end equipment. Our researchers can gain from, and contribute to, training and expertise in other countries. Our strong links to the international health research community are invaluable as we align with, contribute to, and benefit from the global response on serious threats to human health, such as pandemics and climate change.

Our focus for the next four years

Partnership with Māori

We have defined what meeting the obligations outlined in te Tiriti o Waitangi means for the HRC, and the importance of realising the opportunities this affords us (see [Te Tiriti o Waitangi, p9](#)). As a Crown agent, we are committed to ensuring we operate in true partnership with Māori, and further building the processes and reciprocal relationships required to do this. We will strengthen our ability to partner with Māori to co-design our systems, and involve Māori communities so that they can work with us in meeting their needs and ensuring that mātauranga Māori enriches the lives of all New Zealanders.

Our national partnerships

Focusing on furthering the Research Aims of the New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework, we will work with existing and new partners to build the knowledge needed to

make a difference and provide a rapid-response mechanism, where urgent evidence needs arise.

Over the next few years, we will be looking at how we can work across government to better address the causes of health inequity. Addressing these causes will mean looking beyond the health sector to bring broader socio-economic factors into the frame, and looking beyond the present to consider the intergenerational impacts on families and communities. We will be connecting with stakeholders in the health, disability, social, justice, environment and education sectors to focus on the broader causes of inequities in health outcomes.

One-health is an area of increasing focus for the HRC. The health sector cannot address the causes of pollution of the soil, air, and water; mounting antibiotic resistance due to unsustainable agricultural practices, or the support needed for farmers to diversify activities for environmental benefits and the resulting downstream impacts on human health. We need to galvanise a cross-sector response to these issues, so we can generate the evidence needed for policies that span health, environment, primary industries, transport, and regional and local councils. There are global issues of concern too. As people compete for living space with wildlife, habitats increasingly overlap with urban developments and the risk of zoonoses (infections that pass from animals to humans) is greatly increased. If nations are to be effective in preventing future pandemics, we will need international teams of scientists from many disciplines to find workable solutions. New Zealand's researchers will need support for the strong contribution they can make to these efforts.

Our Partnership Programme also gives us the means to connect across sectors to understand the broader effects of major health events, such as COVID-19. We will use our connections to evaluate the New Zealand response in comparison to other countries and ascertain the impacts on our unique and diverse communities.

We will pay greater attention to forging partnerships that involve end-users and communities, and including community experts on the teams that design co-funding initiatives and drive funding decisions. Our work on implementing the NZHRS will guide us as we partner with Māori across all that we do and develop strong relationships with Pacific communities so that they can shape the research agenda and we can better meet their needs.

Working with other agencies to provide access to the infrastructure needed for a highly functioning, research system will also be an important focus, so we can derive the greatest benefit from our strengths in research, innovation and technology development and our rich data assets.

Whilst we are clear in our intent for our national partnerships, the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown will undoubtedly impact on the work programmes and priorities of government and non-government organisations. This may make forming new partnerships challenging for some time.

[Our international partnerships](#)

Through our international agreements with funders in other countries, we will build international partnerships and increase opportunities for New Zealand researchers to engage with the global research community and raise the profile of New Zealand health research in the international arena. We will continue to collaborate with funding agencies in the East-Asia region to fund research in key health areas of mutual interest, including infectious diseases and antimicrobial resistance, cancer, mental health, and any emerging priorities agreed amongst member countries. We will join New Zealand researchers with the global research efforts on combating cancer, focusing on implementation science and underserved populations, and linking our research teams with those in low- and middle-income countries.

A key focus will be indigenous research partnerships, as we link our world-class Māori health researchers with the international indigenous research community and formally share indigenous research knowledge and solutions with Australia and Canada.

Our performance targets

The outlook in 2020	What we need to develop/grow	What we will deliver by 2024
New Zealand is caught up in a COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, and the HRC Chief Executive joins international experts at the WHO-led conference in Geneva, aimed at co-ordinating the international response.	New Zealand urgently needs evidence to mitigate the threat, slow the spread of infection, and plan for future pandemics. The HRC must draw on national and international connections and develop a rapid response that will meet these needs in a very short timeframe.	By 2021, the HRC will have allocated at least \$3 million to Covid-19 research (\$1 million in partnership with the Ministry of Health), for a mix of projects designed to deliver findings needed for both the national and global response to what may be repeated waves of community infection.
Our international programme is creating opportunities for New Zealand researchers to connect, collaborate and access high-end equipment	We need to increase our investment in building international research connections and leveraging global research efforts – in line with MBIE's goals for the Catalyst Fund and the HRC's International Strategy.	By 2024, we will have increased investment in international research partnership opportunities and extended the range of opportunities offered to New Zealand researchers.
Climate change, environmental issues and our changing world are influencing the health of New Zealanders in ways that we need to better understand, plan for and address.	We need to partner with Māori and draw together experts from a broad range of research fields, iwi, communities and industries to help us develop solutions. These solutions must build on te ao Māori and Pacific worldviews, which acknowledge the intimate connection between human health and that of the natural world that surrounds us – the basis for our definition of 'one health'.	By 2024, we will have established a cross-sectoral partnership that focuses on 'one health', and will have offered at least three funding opportunities that build knowledge, capacity and capability in an area covered by the HRC's definition of 'one health'. (This definition will be developed in 2020).

Key annual performance indicators and targets for our work related to research commissioned through partnerships and international agreements will be reported in our Statement of Performance Expectations under Output 2: Connecting for greater impact.



Strengthening skills and systems

| E whakapakari ana i ngā pūkenga me ngā pūnaha

We develop and sustain the people, processes and systems required to deliver the ethical, excellent, innovative and impactful research New Zealand needs.

Our Goals

- Investing in people and systems for innovation and impact
- Advancing Māori health through building capacity and capability
- Achieving health equity through investment in a diverse workforce.

Our Tools

- Our comprehensive career development programme aimed at building the capacity and capability to undertake Māori-led health research and Pacific-led research and also:
 - Launching and establishing research careers
 - Engaging health professionals in research
 - Fostering emerging leaders.
- Our stringent investment processes, specialised for specific opportunities to:
 - Identify excellent research that meets the needs of New Zealanders
 - Drive innovation in the health sector
 - Partner with stakeholders to meet specific evidence needs in flexible timeframes
 - Mount a rapid response to deliver on urgent research needs.
- Our information systems and the data that we hold and contribute to national resources, such as the New Zealand Research Information System (NZRIS).
- Our ethics and regulatory committees
 - The HRC Ethics Committees; the Standing Committee on Therapeutic Trials, the Gene Technology Advisory Committee.

Why is this important?

Training, building and maintaining a skilled, strong and diverse health research workforce is fundamental to investing in excellent, high-impact health research and improving health equity. The HRC is the only agency in New Zealand with a statutory responsibility to do this.

A health research system that is fit for New Zealand must be designed in partnership with Māori to foster health research capacity and capability, value and support mātauranga Māori and kaupapa Māori methodologies, and engage iwi, hapū and Māori communities in the research process. Strengthening the Māori workforce supports Māori to build mātauranga Māori and kaupapa Māori methodologies for the benefit of all New Zealanders, and as a national and international resource. This is an essential part of ensuring that our systems and services advance mātauranga Māori.

Building and maintaining diversity in the workforce is part of our endeavours to promote health equity. Pacific researchers must be supported to utilise and develop the methodologies and solutions that work for their communities, and to engage with knowledge, expertise and research needs in the Pacific Islands. Engaging Pacific communities in identifying the next generation of Pacific researchers will be crucial to our success. Our workforce must be a 'mirror on society', reflecting the diverse populations that we serve, including people with disabilities, new New Zealanders (migrants and refugees) and people with diverse gender identities and partner preferences.

Our processes and systems are key to delivering the best value for the government investment in health research. They need to be transparent, equitable and designed to identify the excellent research and researchers that will make the greatest impact for New

Zealand. Innovation flourishes only when clear pathways to translation and commercialisation are in place and assessment processes are geared for high-risk investments. The government must also be confident that all research investments are ethical and safe, and have access to expert advice on the advisability and acceptability of introducing new technologies in health research performed in this country.

Our focus for the next four years

A strong and diverse health research workforce

We will continue to support excellent people to gain research skills and advance a research career. We will focus our career development programme on addressing the areas where we most need to build capacity and capability to realise our goals and advance government priorities.

As we lead implementation of NZHRS Action 2 on research for healthy futures for Māori, we will be partnering with Māori to co-design our systems and opportunities and reviewing our mechanisms to build the capability in Māori communities to engage in health research. We also look forward to leading the implementation of Action 4 of the NZHRS – Develop and sustain a strong health research workforce. The wealth of information that will result will guide the HRC and other funders in responding to the infrastructure aims of the HRPF. We expect to make a number of changes to our career development programme on the basis of this work and the results of a collaborative survey of career development opportunities offered by MBIE, the HRC and the Royal Society Te Apārangi, when they are available.

We will be reviewing the awards that we have put in place to build capacity and capability for the Pacific health research workforce, as we work with our partners to implement Action 3 of the NZHRS – investing in research that results in equitable outcomes for Pacific peoples. This will also involve undertaking a stocktake of Pacific health research, and developing opportunities to link with Pacific health researchers across the Pacific region.

Our efforts to build capacity and capability in the clinical research workforce will continue, and we will monitor our success as we strive to involve more health practitioners in identifying knowledge needs and generating the evidence they need to meet them. These efforts will also be linked with those under our [Health Delivery Investment Round](#) (see page 21).

Independent Research Organisations form a vital part of our diverse science ecosystem in Aotearoa New Zealand. The HRC is currently reviewing the existing funding opportunity to ensure the initiative maximises our strategic objectives; continues to maintain and build the unique, diverse and equitable health research capability that Aotearoa New Zealand needs now and in the future; and strongly aligns with MBIE's Strategic Science Investment Fund (SSIF).

Equitable, effective and efficient processes and systems

Our processes and systems are at the heart of our business and central to everything that we do. Now that the HRPF has provided us with a guide for how health research should be performed in New Zealand, the five priority Research Attributes identified will shape our investment processes in future (see [The New Zealand Health Research Prioritisation Framework, page 11](#)). This will include a focus on diversity among our Council, our staff, our committees, and the research teams that we fund.

We have introduced a new research impact criterion in our investment processes that will assist us, and the researchers we fund, in keeping a clear line of sight to impact. We will soon be introducing reporting two years and five years after our contracts end to help us better evaluate the impact that our investments have had and ensure that we are making the right investment choices.

Other specific areas of focus, as our resources allow, will include developing policies for data sharing and open-access publishing, our contributions to the New Zealand Research

Information System (NZRIS), development of a new grant management system and the introduction of finance management and customer relationship management systems.

We need to find ways of involving end-users and communities more in our funding and priority-

setting processes and will seek advice from our stakeholders on the best ways to do this.

We will continue to make a strong contribution to the ethics and regulatory frameworks in New Zealand through our Ethics Committee and other advisory committees – providing advice to our Ministers on key issues for health research, as needed.

Our performance targets

The outlook in 2020	What we need to develop/grow	What we will deliver by 2024
The HRC has now run four rapid response processes ; for H1N1 flu; the Christchurch Earthquakes; the Christchurch Mosque Attacks, and the COVID-19 pandemic.	We need to formalise a process for responding to government needs for research in short time frames.	By 2022: We will have developed a specialised 'rapid-response' investment process that allows us to respond to urgent research needs and allocate funds in short timeframes, without compromising on the quality of the research funded.
Our assessment processes are rigorous and focus on excellence, Māori health advancement and impact.	We must ensure that all research we fund reflects the Research Attributes of the HRPF (see The Outlook for Driver 1: Fostering excellence and innovation , p22).	By 2022: Our funding processes will appropriately reflect the Research Attributes of the HRPF, Why in New Zealand, Mana Tāngata, Excellence, Impact and Equity.
Our career development awards programme is fostering outstanding emerging leaders, sustaining and building Māori research capacity and capability, fostering emerging Pacific health researchers and leaders, and training health professionals to engage in and drive research.	We must align our career development programme with the Infrastructure Aims of the HRPF and implement the career development components of Actions 2-4 of the NZHRS.	By 2024: We will have aligned our career development opportunities with any agreed outcomes from Actions 2-4 that have been approved by the NZHRS Steering Group.

Key annual performance indicators and targets for our work related to building and sustaining the research workforce and ensuring that New Zealand health research is ethical and safe will be reported in our Statement of Performance Expectations under Output 3: Strengthening skills and growing a diverse workforce, and Output 4: Keeping the research system ethical and safe, respectively.

Appendix 1:

The HRC's reporting requirements

Āpitianga 1: Ngā tukanga tuhi pūrongo a HRC

Forward-looking	Performance-based
The Statement of Intent signals our intentions for the next four years and medium-term measures of performance (produced every three years and required under the Crown Entities Act 2004)	The Annual Report provides detailed information on performance for the previous year and results of performance measures, and detailed financial statements (required annually under the Crown Entities Act 2004)
The HRC's three-yearly Investment Plan, provides details of HRC funding opportunities for the next three years to send stable signals to the research community (required by MBIE)	<p>Six-monthly and quarterly financial reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exceptions-based six-monthly reports against the SPE and the Crown Funding Agreement/ Output Agreement with the Ministry of Health and MBIE • Quarterly financial reports against the SPE and the Crown Funding Agreement/Output Agreement with the Ministry of Health and MBIE
The Statement of Performance Expectations (SPE) contains forecast performance for the next year and financial information (required annually under the 2013 amendments to the Crown Entities Act 2004)	The Investment Impact Report demonstrates the impact that HRC investment has had and provides advice on increasing the impact of future investments (required every three years to inform budget bids by the Ministry of Health and MBIE)
The Data Information Report* detailed information on outputs from HRC investments (required annually by MBIE, for the purpose of monitoring the performance of Vote Business, Science and Innovation's Investment in research)	

* During the term of this Statement of Intent, this report will be abolished when the HRC commences the automatic transfer of data directly into the New Zealand Research Information System (NZRIS), developed by MBIE.

Appendix 2:

The HRC's functions under the Health Research Council Act 1990

Āpitihanga 2: Ngā mahi a HRC i raro iho i te Health Research Act 1990

- a. To advise the Minister² on national health research policy.
- b. To administer funds granted to the Council for the purpose of implementing national health research policy.
- c. To negotiate, once every three years, the bulk funding allocations that may be made to the Council by the Government for the funding of health research.
- d. To foster the recruitment, education, training, and retention of those engaged in health research in New Zealand.
- e. To initiate and support health research.
- f. To encourage initiatives into health research by soliciting research proposals and applications, particularly in areas considered by the Council to have a high priority.
- g. To consult, for the purpose of establishing priorities in relation to health research, with:
 - (i) the Minister of Health
 - (ii) the Ministry of Health
 - (iii) District Health Boards
 - (iv) other persons who fund or produce research, whether in the public sector or the private sector
 - (v) persons who have knowledge of health issues from the consumer perspective.
- h. To promote and disseminate the results of health research in ways that will be most effective in encouraging their contribution to health science, health policy, and healthcare delivery.
- i. To advertise actively for applications for grants to support proposals or personal awards in relation to health research.
- j. To appoint the members of the Biomedical Research Committee, the Public Health Research Committee, the Māori Health Committee and the Ethics Committee.
- k. To ensure the development and application of appropriate assessment standards by committees or subcommittees that assess health research proposals.
- l. To administer any additional funds that may be made available to the Council from either public or private sources for the support of health research.

² The Act was written when the Minister of Health both owned, and managed the funding for, the HRC

Appendix 3:

How the New Zealand Health Research Strategy delivers to the New Zealand Health Strategy

Health research is integral to implementing the New Zealand Health Strategy and achieving its vision for all New Zealanders to 'live well, stay well and get well'.

- Research advances all five themes of the New Zealand Health Strategy in the following ways.
 1. People powered – effectively co-design research and healthcare in a way that:
 - listens to consumer voices throughout the research process, especially voices from communities with the poorest health
 - shares research findings with New Zealand communities to take a partnership approach to healthcare and wellbeing.
 2. Closer to home – use evidence from research in New Zealand and overseas to inform the:
 - design of integrated health services and population health interventions
 - care provided to individuals, especially in managing long-term conditions
 - best investments for health and wellbeing early in life.
 3. Value and high performance – value and prioritise the use of evidence in decision-making across the health system, including to achieve:
 - equity of health outcomes
 - quality improvement in health services
 - best investment approaches to address complex health and social issues.
 4. One team – work together to improve the health of New Zealanders by:
 - collaborating between researchers, universities, health providers and industry
 - sharing and spreading evidence-based knowledge and practice
 - building research expertise in the health workforce
 - building clinical understanding in the research and development workforce
 - protecting the physical wellbeing.

Excerpt from Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Ministry of Health. 2017. New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027. Wellington: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and Ministry of Health, page 31.



Health Research Council
of New Zealand

Te Kaunihera Rangahau Hauora o Aotearoa

New Zealand Government

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Published by the Health Research Council of New Zealand

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