

10 Show Place  
Addington  
CHRISTCHURCH

29 July 2016

Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Health Government Administration  
Parliament Buildings  
WELLINGTON

Tēnā koe i nga ahuatanga o te wa

**New Zealand Health Research Strategy**  
***Submission to the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Health***

**Introduction: Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu**

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu writes in response to the *New Zealand Health Research Strategy* to examine the scope of health research in New Zealand.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is a limited partnership, supported by the nine iwi of Te Waipounamu through a Shareholders Council known as Te Taumata. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu was launched in July 2014 as the South Island Commissioning Agency for Whānau Ora. Te Taumata has appointed an independent governance board which is responsible for the investment strategy. The name, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, represents the convergence of the rivers of Te Waipounamu, bringing sustenance to the people, and reflecting the partnership's founding principle of whānaungatanga.

Commissioning in the context of Whānau Ora is the process of identifying the aspirations of whānau and investing in them whether they are new or existing initiatives. These whānau-centred initiatives are expected to best reflect progress towards Whānau Ora outcomes.

Whānau Ora is an inclusive approach to support whānau to work together as whānau, rather than separately with individual family members. We consider that Whānau Ora outcomes will be met when whānau are:

- Self-managing;
- Living healthy lifestyles;
- Participating fully in society;
- Confidently participating in Te Ao Māori;
- Economically secure and successfully involved in wealth creation;
- Cohesive, resilient and nurturing;
- And able to act as responsible stewards of their living and natural environments.

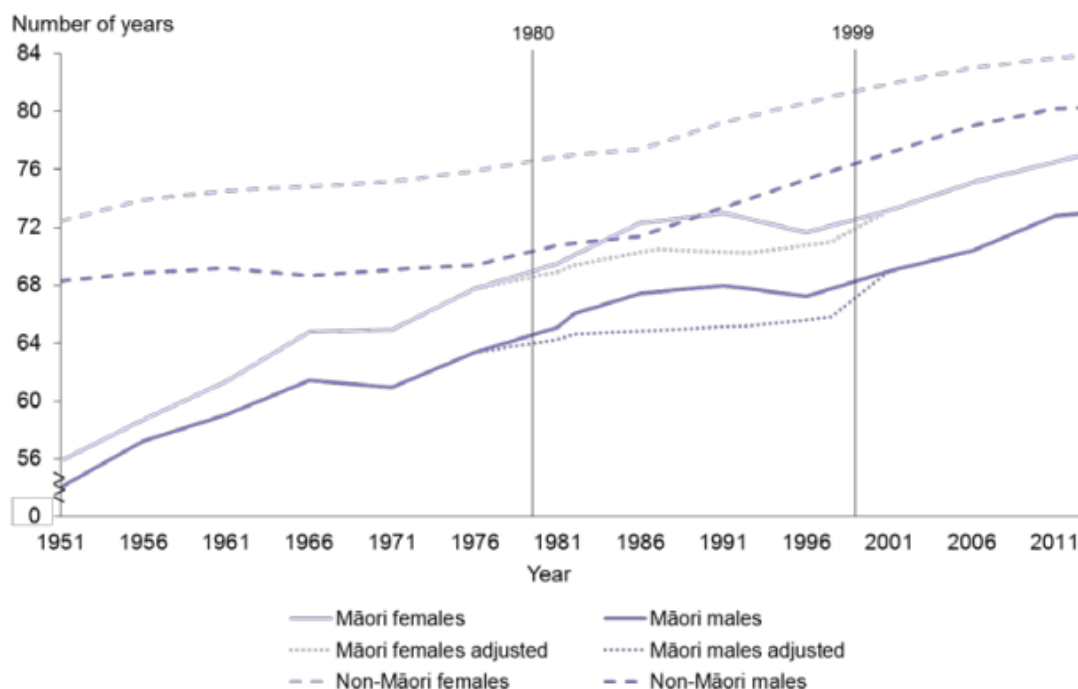
Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu writes in response to the New Zealand Health Research Strategy public discussion document (May 2016). New Zealand as a country has always had a desire to help people live their lives to their greatest potential, and has developed a strong health research background to support this. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu supports the governmental focus on health research and its ability to drive positive health outcomes for all New Zealanders. The global response to health issues changes daily, and science and innovation are constantly driving greater research towards new, different and better health solutions.

The crucial factor for any health based research is for it to be appropriately resourced. The Budget 2016 announced an additional \$96 million for health research, a move which has been positively received across the health research community. The impact of a well-funded health research sector will be significant, especially as it will encourage and enable New Zealand's best health researchers to remain in New Zealand and produce positive health changes into their own communities.

As a kaupapa Maori organisation, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu was pleased to see both a recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi as a guiding principle of the New Zealand Health Research Strategy, and the inclusion of Maori specific health strategy (*He Korowai Oranga: Maori Health Strategy*). There was also positive recognition of the distinctive health challenges faced by Maori in New Zealand.

Maori will generally live between six to eight years less than non-Maori (*Tatau Kahukura: Maori Health Chart Book 2015, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*, Ministry of Health: figure 5), and face higher cancer rates than non-Maori (*Tatau Kahukura*, 32), higher rates of hospitalisation for asthma (*Tatau Kahukura*, 37), and higher rates of diabetes (*Tatau Kahukura*, 38-39), among other health challenges.

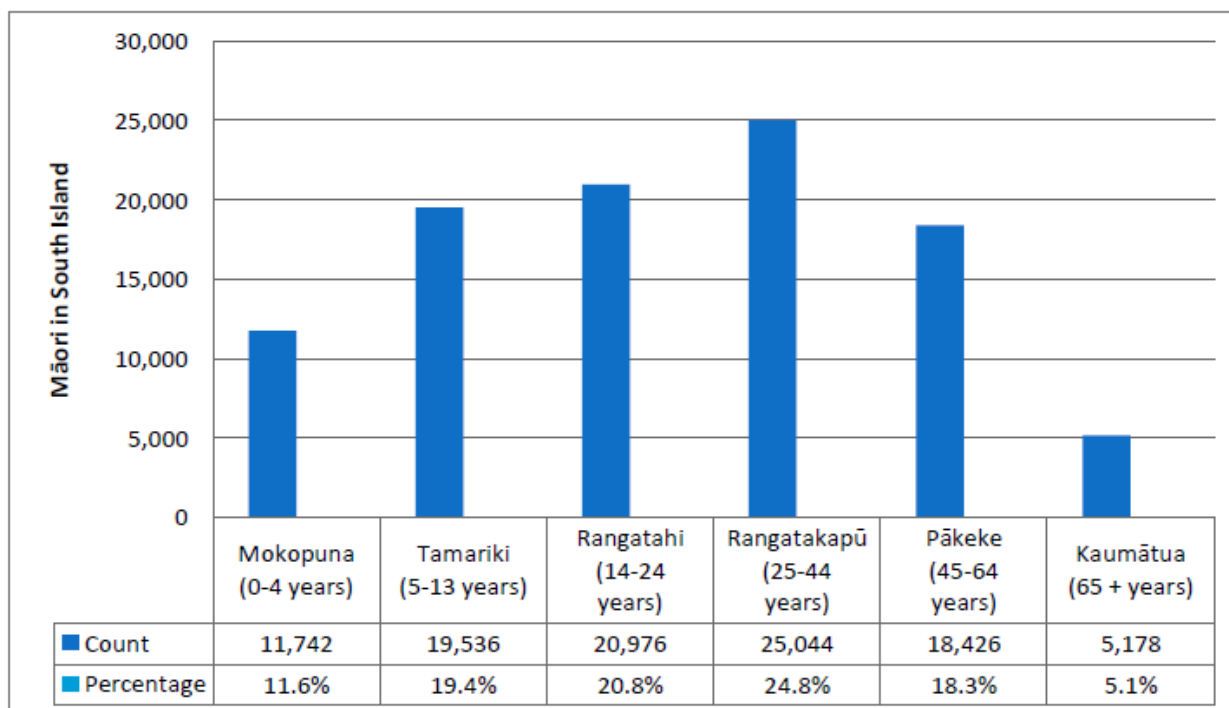
**Figure 5: Life expectancy at birth, by gender, Māori and non-Māori, 1951–2013**



Some of these lower health outcomes can be attributed to known factors. Maori are more likely to experience lower socio-economic status than non-Maori, which has significant impact on health outcomes (*Tatau Kahukura*, 13). However, Maori and non-Maori have similar annual alcohol consumption (*Tatau Kahukura*, 17), similar consumption of fruit and vegetables (*Tatau Kahukura*, 18), and similar rates of physical activity (*Tatau Kahukura*, 21). Further research is needed to understand why these recognised contributions to health outcomes (alcohol, nutrition and physical fitness) produce such different health outcomes between Maori and non-Maori.

However, the sole focus of the New Zealand Health Research Strategy should not be solely on the health needs of Maori. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu submits that the New Zealand Health Research Strategy should take a holistic approach to Maori health, one that is driven by and for Maori. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu further submits that one of the Strategy Priorities in the Health Research Strategy should be specifically focused on Maori.

Figure 2: Selected age groupings of Māori descent population in the South Island, count and percentage, Census 2013



The holistic approach of the Maori Strategic Priority will require a range of solutions focused on Maori at all stages of engagement with health research. While New Zealand currently has an overall aging population, the Maori population is very youthful, with over 50% of Maori in Te Waipounamu (the South Island) under the age of 24 (Census 2013). Consequently, in the future, young Maori will make a significant proportion of the labour market. Every effort should be made to ensure that those young Maori are supported to build the capability and confidence to obtain professional roles within health research. Maori should not be focussed on solely as the recipients of health research. Maori should be involved in the research, development and implementation of health solutions for other Maori and for all New Zealanders. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu submits that, as part of the Maori Strategic Priority, there should be a focus on encouraging young Maori into health and science careers.

All health solutions for Maori should be developed and designed by Maori for Maori. The New Zealand Health Research Strategy already outlines several areas where Maori are involved in health research and solutions. It is submitted that this engagement strategy should be continued and increased. There are many Maori health providers, community groups and other organisations which have significant knowledge regarding the health challenges faced by Maori. Also, and most importantly, the whānau themselves have extensive knowledge about the health challenges which they face. These sources of knowledge should be fully involved with in the development of any health research.

Whānau Ora centres on the understanding that whānau are central to the lives of the members of that whānau. Because they have influential, close and enduring relationships with each

other, whānau are in a unique positions to promote lifestyles that can lead to optimal health and wellbeing. Whānau can shape lifestyles by establishing codes of conduct that will endorse healthy behaviours. Attempting to assess and treat an individual health issue, without reference to the wider influence of the whānau, would be unsatisfactory, incomplete, inefficient and unlikely to result in long-term positive health outcomes.

The recognition and implementation of the Treaty of Waitangi, culturally appropriate and engaged responses, and understanding of wider frameworks like Whānau Ora are equally relevant to health research as any other area of emphasis.

In 1991, the New Zealand Nursing Council set a requirement that 20% of the comprehensive registration should incorporate cultural safety. The expectation of Kawa Whakaruruhau was that nurses would not only be clinically competent; but also culturally safe.

Section 118 (i) of the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act (2003) subsequently requires that the Board, "*set standards of clinical and cultural competence, and ethical conduct to be observed by health practitioners of the profession*".

The content of cultural safety education is focused on the understanding of self as a cultural bearer; the historical, social and political influences on health, in particular health and wellbeing whether pertaining to individuals, peoples, organisations or communities; and the development of relationships that engender trust and respect. We contend that all of these aspects are important to health research to assist in the education and engagement of the health workforce.

There is also a need to encourage and support young Maori to pursue health research and science research careers. Maori health professionals typically serve at the front line, serving their communities, because that is where the immediate and urgent needs are - paramedics, midwives, mental health workers, nurses, doctors etc. Consequently, a good number of our Māori health professionals are less free or able to pursue scientific research careers and/or lead 'hard-core' research. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu recommends support is necessary to close the gap between practice and research for Maori, and to build Maori intellectual capital in the areas of health and science. A major challenge lies in the fact that building a proper health/science research career requires significantly more time in training and additional specialised study -- time Maori health professionals may be hard put to find, given the complex and diverse needs of their communities.

Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is excited for the potential of the New Zealand Research Strategy, and looks forward to the positive changes that it can make for Maori and for all New Zealanders. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu is open to any future engagement on the *New Zealand Health Research Strategy*, and appreciates the opportunity provided by the Ministry of Science and Innovation and the Ministry of Health to engage in the consultation process.

**Contact details for this submission are:**

- Helen Leahy, Pouarahi / Chief Executive, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu o Te Waipounamu ([Helen.leahy@tePūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.org](mailto:Helen.leahy@tePūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.org)) and

- Alice Matheson, Policy Advisor, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu o Te Waipounamu ([alice.matheson@tePūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.org](mailto:alice.matheson@tePūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.org)).
- Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu o Te Waipounamu, Ground Floor, 10 Show Place, Addington, Christchurch. Phone: 0800 187 689

Heoi ano



Helen Leahy  
Pouarahi / Chief Executive