

From: no-reply@mbie.govt.nz
To: [Research, Science and Innovation Strategy Secretariat](#)
Subject: Draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy submission
Date: Monday, 4 November 2019 3:07:59 p.m.
Attachments: [Online-submission-form-uploadsdraft-research-science-and-innovation-strategy-submissionsComments-on-Draft-Science-Strategy.docx](#)

Submission on Draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy received:

Are you making your submission as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation?

Individual

Name

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Name of organisation or institutional affiliation

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Role within organisation

Emeritus Professor

Email address (in case we would like to follow up with you further about your submission)

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Which of the below areas do you feel represents your perspective as a submitter? (Please select all that apply)

Researcher

If you selected other, please specify here:

Gender

M

Ethnicity

Pakeha

Name of organisation on whose behalf you are submitting, if different to the organisation named above

In which sector does your organisation operate: (Please select all that apply)

If you selected other, please specify here:

How large is your organisation (in number of full-time-equivalent employees)?

Please indicate if you would like some or all of the information you provide in your submission kept in confidence, and if so which information.

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Comments-on-Draft-Science-Strategy.docx - [Download File](#)

Comments on Draft Science Strategy

Role of Social Science Research

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November 2019

(1) Introduction

The strategy begins with enunciation of Government goals, many of which are social, and broadly the strategy purports to derive science goals from these. This is praise-worthy although as a general principle, science goals should surely stand removed from government goals and show linkages. However, despite the high social science research components involved with most such goals little in the strategy seems aimed at providing a policy framework which would enable NZ social science research to achieve these objectives.

The NZ social science research 'community' is scattered across several institutional domains (Universities, Polytechnics, CRIs, government ministries, NGOs etc.) and varies considerably in training and coordination capabilities. A wide array of disciplines are involved, and a strong multi-disciplinary framework is required to cover the complexities of social issues. There is almost no required infrastructure to support its activities, and although largely unknown, its capacity to deliver high quality research apposite to research goals is low.

(2) Models

Two models about what is required for a well-functioning social science research community are the ESRC in the UK and the HRC in NZ>

The ESRC's mission is:

- promote and support, by any means, high-quality research and related postgraduate training on social and economic issues
- develop and support the national data infrastructure that underpins high-quality research
- advance knowledge and provide trained social scientists who meet the needs of users and beneficiaries, thereby contributing to the economic competitiveness of the UK, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and the quality of life
- communicate clearly and promote public understanding of social science.

The HRC is the Crown agency responsible for managing the Government's investment in health research. Our mission is 'benefiting New Zealand through health research', with a vision of improved health and quality of life for all.

The HRC is responsible to the Minister of Health, and its major funding agreement is through the Minister of Business, Innovation and Employment. The Health Research Council Act 1990 established our statutory functions as:

- advising the Minister and administering funds in relation to national health research policy
- fostering the recruitment, education, training, and retention of those engaged in health research in New Zealand
- initiating and supporting health research
- undertaking consultation to establish priorities in health research
- promoting and disseminating the results of health research to encourage their contribution to health science, policy and delivery, and
- ensuring the development and application of appropriate assessment standards by committees or subcommittees that assess health research proposals

Beyond the generic funding function (implemented variously through the RSNZ, Mbie and separate government departments) the NZ social science research community has minimal support infrastructure.

In the 2000s some attempts to build capacity were implemented, particularly through the BRCS initiated by Minister Maharey together with broader efforts through MSD to develop evidence-based policy. However, little progress has lasted, perhaps because the programme wasn't designed with infrastructure-building in mind.

(3) Needs: Governance/coordination

The social science research community is divided by institutional domain, discipline etc. and there are no coordinating structures which would allow better cooperation and indeed no 'umbrella body' that might represent the interests of the community is available. Several such bodies existed in the 2000s but have since lapsed.

(4) Needs: Clearinghouse

Despite evident undercitation of available NZ SSR material there are limited comprehensive information repositories. (These include Nat Libraries' INNZ, SIA's Hub and Community-research's website. Further development of these is needed.

(5) Needs: Academic Data-Collection.

The social science research community obtains much of its data needs through StatsNZ – especially the General Social Survey (GSS). However, there are topics the government does not want to directly research itself and so there needs to be resources for support of other data collection sources central to information needs, such as the NZ Election Study. Also funding to enable access to available data (some is available for the GUINZ study).

(6) Needs: Funding/Career development.

The academic workforce is aging. Little is known about the remainder of the workforce. There is much evidence of needs for training and the development of career-paths. Funding needs to be shaped (in part) to facilitate these.

(7) Needs: Further NZ journals/monographs

While there is a range of discipline-based social science journals in NZ there are likely gaps where articles which could be published locally go overseas.

(8) Needs: Data Archive

Most jurisdictions have data archives where survey (but also qualitative) data can be stored for subsequent secondary analyses.

(9) Needs: Methodological standards/experiences

More work is needed on the research experiences of NZers and on developing better standards including funding methodological research.

(10) Needs: SR Methods Training

A wider range of training opportunities is needed. (Compass provides much)

(11) Needs: Policy translation & Popularisation

People with experience are needed to facilitate the gap between policy (e.g. parliamentary briefing) and Public.

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