

From: no-reply@mbie.govt.nz
To: [Research, Science and Innovation Strategy Secretariat](#)
Subject: Draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy submission
Date: Thursday, 7 November 2019 9:43:09 a.m.
Attachments: [Online-submission-form-uploadsdraft-research-science-and-innovation-strategy-submissionsNZ-RSI-strategy-consultation.docx](#)

Submission on Draft Research, Science and Innovation Strategy received:

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

Organisation

Name

Ricahrd Manknight and Lynette Brownfield

Name of organisation or institutional affiliation

University of Otago

Role within organisation

President and Secretary

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

lynette.brownfield@otago.ac.nz

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

If you selected other, please specify here:

Gender

Ethnicity

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

New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists (NZSPB)

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

Research

If you selected other, please specify here:

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

The NZSPB had 184 members as of March 31 2019

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.

Please upload your submission document here

NZ-RSI-strategy-consultation.docx - [Download File](#)

New Zealand Society of Plant Biologists (NZSPB), applauds the government's vision "By 2027, New Zealand will be a global innovation hub, a world-class generator of new ideas for a productive, sustainable, and inclusive future", and the ambition to raise level of spending on R&D to two percent of GDP by 2027.

The NZSPB consists of plant biologists and research students from academic institutions and Crown Research Institutes throughout New Zealand, who study plant ecology, physiology and molecular biology. We are all passionate about plant science and are motivated to use our expertise to help New Zealand adopt sustainable farming practices and protect our natural environment, while continuing to produce the high-quality food desired by New Zealand consumers and our export markets. Thus, we would like to see our society's members playing a major role in contributing to the government's vision across excellence in research, providing impact and, as an already established society, connectivity.

BUT we consider a major element is missing from the Strategy released for consultation: the role of modern biotechnology in New Zealand. The Strategy has a focus on innovation at a global level with a central theme around sustainability and a "transition to a clean, green, carbon neutral New Zealand". We question how can this be achieved if we do not have credible access to the best tools available: gene modification and gene editing. The current HSNO and Biosecurity Acts provide such a difficult route to commercialisation, it effectively prevents New Zealand-based researchers at Universities and Crown Research Institutes, using these tools to solve New Zealand-centric problems. They prevent innovative, smart solutions to enable an equitable transition to sustainable farming practices.

Thus, in our view, if the government is serious about achieving its vision, the legislation around modern biotechnology needs to be addressed. We need legislation based on science that recognises the modern reality that organisms cannot be simply categorised as 'genetically modified' or 'not genetically modified', and an approach that weighs the benefits alongside risks of each specific application. And this needs to be clarified soon, as plant varieties take years in development and, if New Zealand does not begin to develop the next generation of crops now, it will be left behind in global innovation with reduced capacity to provides clean, green impacts in the plant sciences.