

Auckland Museum submission on Te Ara Paerangi – Future Pathways Green Paper v1.

Introduction

Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira (“Auckland Museum”) welcomes the opportunity to comment on Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways.

Large metropolitan museums such as Auckland Museum conduct research and contribute widely to the RSI system. Established in 1852, we are New Zealand’s oldest research institution. We have our own Act of Parliament, the *Auckland War Memorial Museum Act 1996*. Our collections and research activities span a wide range of human history and natural sciences, covering the North Island, Aotearoa New Zealand, the Pacific and issues of global significance. Research is one of our core activities and a statutory objective.

Our baseline operational expenditure directly attributable to research activities is just under \$2.5m per annum, although total expenditure has temporarily increased due to the awarding of an MBIE Endeavour grant. In our research we prioritise collaborating with other institutions (such as universities and CRIs) and communities. We also undertake a large number of research-related activities. Our collections form a critical part of New Zealand’s research infrastructure, and we are responsible for developing, maintaining and facilitating access to these for Museum and other researchers. We deliver scientific outreach and engagement programmes, publicly display parts of our collections (and research associated with them), and deliver education programmes informed by our research.

No baseline Crown research funding is received for our research or research-related activities; we are reliant on local authority funding (which is not sustainable in the medium- to long-term), philanthropic funding, and occasional contestable research funding from government.

Approximately 40 Museum staff and 10 honorary research associates are active in research, and our collections are used by researchers from across New Zealand and around the world for research.

Key points of our submission

Our submission responds to select questions from your discussion document. Our key points are as follows:

- Large metropolitan museums have rich and diverse collections and expertise for research, creating novel opportunity for the RSI system in New Zealand. Auckland Museum has a 4.5 million object heritage asset and specialised subject expertise. This globally unique resource enables interdisciplinary, collaborative and connected research. The combination of diverse collections with a depth and breadth of subject expertise creates a synergy for research that is not replicated elsewhere.
- We are unique in the research sector due to our roles in conservation and care of taonga. This is an important area of research, partnership, and workforce development.
- We agree that there is a need for a new national research funding system, and that the balance between base funding and contestable funding needs to be carefully examined. We support an annual operational research grant to organisations carrying out research activities and managing research infrastructure.

- Large metropolitan museums such as Auckland Museum should receive annual base funding from the Crown that recognises their research activities and collections development, care and access.
- Any new funding system also must recognise the important role of iwi leading research in New Zealand.
- An essential component of a thriving RSI system must include public engagement. Museums provide an ideal opportunity to partner in public engagement in research – enabling research impact and knowledge translation. As such, mechanisms that facilitate partnership between research organisations and communities, and funding to enable this, are needed.
- The shift to open science and open access needs to be recognised, with explicitly developed infrastructure to support this transition – whilst at the same time empowering and supporting issues of data sovereignty and indigenous knowledge systems.
- Principles for setting future research priorities should:
 - emphasise the importance of periodic review to ensure priorities are fit for purpose and adapted as necessary.
 - include a statutory requirement for Government to engage with the full research sector and undertake public consultation during priority setting, allowing informed and meaningful input into the development of research priorities.
 - place indigenous knowledge and research practice at the heart of research priorities.
- A new funding system for research infrastructure should be implemented and open to non-Crown organisations. This should include:
 - an annual asset renewal and maintenance payment for named infrastructure as part of an organisation’s base research funding.
 - an annual contestable capital grant funding pool open to non-Crown organisations for infrastructure replacement or investment in new research infrastructure, focused on small investments.
 - providing an avenue for non-Crown research organisations to work with MBIE on budget bids for new infrastructure or replacement infrastructure, focusing on larger capital investments.

Response to consultation questions

NGĀ WHAKAAROTAU RANGAHAU | RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The focus should explore whole-of-system priorities, concentrating on the role that research activities and resources play in achieving national goals. The scope should recognise both the potential for research within museum sector and the significance of national collections.

To identify national research priorities, the government needs to establish regular and structured consultation, and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. The structure needs to ensure that groups like museums and the museum sector are heard and have opportunity to participate, to ensure the potential and scope of research within museum sector is harnessed for the benefit of the RSI system and our communities.

There must be a centring of indigenous knowledge and research practices when determining focus areas, including partnerships with community and iwi. Te Tiriti should be seen as an opportunity to enrich RSI rather than an obligation.

Priority-setting should address issues of colonisation / indigenisation; the need to prioritise kaupapa Māori research practice; the importance of capability building – including RSI career pathways across the full breadth of the research sector, including in the culture and heritage sector; the need to respond swiftly to the climate crisis; the need to prioritise wellbeing.

The structure must also recognise the value of cross-disciplinary research.

We agree that a key challenge for the RSI system is enabling stronger connections across institutions and organisations, between disciplines, and between the RSI community and the public. We would like to see new and more opportunities and mechanisms for Museums to partner with tertiary institutions and the CRI sector – this would bring about new opportunity for research and for public engagement with research for research impact.

The focus of museums and museum practice has been rapidly evolving – to become sites of interrogation; civic duty; and a trusted voice within society: Auckland Museum’s role as a civic institution is to be relevant for our audiences and our Auckland constituency discussing the issues that impact their lives. This creates new potential to strengthen connections with other aspects of the RSI system – both in terms of public engagement and knowledge translation and in terms of museums being a unique resource for research.

In establishing connections as a key challenge for the RSI system, we propose that it will be essential to view leadership, coordination, and collaboration as activities in their own rights – needing expertise, support, and infrastructure. This is even more important in a small RSI system like that of New Zealand.

Consideration could be given to a programme similar to the Australian government funding of Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) which support industry-led collaborations between industry, researchers and the community¹.

TE TIRITI, MĀTAURANGA MĀORI ME NGĀ WAWATA O TE MĀORI TE TIRITI, MĀTAURANGA MĀORI, AND SUPPORTING MĀORI ASPIRATIONS

A more active, forward looking and innovative approach would be to recognise the value and importance of Mātauranga Māori, to expand research knowledge of Western and other knowledge systems.

The role of research impact is important here too, in particular the role for museums in the interpretation and dissemination of research

Auckland Museum has established this as a priority through its 2018-2023 Research Strategy. An example of working in this area is demonstrated by Te Mana o Rangitāhua, a five-year MBIE Endeavour funded research programme, co-led by Ngāti Kuri and Auckland Museum. This research programme focuses on the biodiversity and ecosystems of Rangitāhua / Kermadec Islands, alongside a mātauranga lens on translating the resulting research evidence into tangible

¹ <https://business.gov.au/Grants-and-Programs/Cooperative-Research-Centres-CRC-Grants>

tools for iwi-led management of the Rangitāhua environment. The research team will adopt a transformational approach to informing the ecosystem management of this marine reserve space, by identifying tohu of ecosystem change within a kaupapa Māori framework to build knowledge and develop methods to ensure the resilience of Rangitāhua's ecosystems.

This is the first MBIE Endeavour awarded to a museum and demonstrates the potential for leadership in research outside 'big players' alongside the importance of recognising the research leadership and expertise within iwi.

This reinforces the importance of engagement of iwi and mana whenua within the RSI sector, and the need to centre mātauranga Māori in the process of research. Museums are organisations that can help the development of partnerships between iwi and the RSI sector.

TE TUKU PŪTEA | FUNDING

The current funding system is not equitable for all research organisations or researchers. We support moving to a new funding system that supports the research activities and research infrastructure of all institutions that contribute to national research priorities, including those that have traditionally been outside the national funding system, such as large metropolitan museums.

Auckland Museum has several important national research roles. We undertake research across a broad range of natural science and human history disciplines, we hold collections of national and international significance which are accessed for research by museum and external researchers, and we perform science and research outreach.

Our geographic and community focus is not limited to Auckland, with research activities occurring across the country and the Pacific. We estimate that over three quarters of our annual research expenditure is of national benefit. Yet all of our business-as-usual research activities and infrastructure are funded by local authority or philanthropic funding sources, not the Crown. This situation is not sustainable in the medium to long-term, and our local authority funder believes, in principle, there should be Crown contributions to our activities of national significance.

We would support a new baseline funding model that addresses these issues by providing an annual operational grant for research activities.

Operating critical research assets, including collections of significance held outside the National Significant Collections Database, should also be considered a core research function. Collections that contribute to national research or policy priorities should receive dedicated annual opex funding for their development, storage and care, and to facilitate researcher access. (We deal with capital investment below, in response to another question.)

By way of example, Auckland Museum's c.4.5m item collection has the same purpose as the National NSCD, which is funded by central government. The Museum's collection receives no Crown contribution, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain research access to collections on our local authority funding alone. We have recently reduced researcher access to some collections from six to three days per week, and a significant proportion of our collections is not accessible at all to researchers due to storage and resourcing constraints.

We would welcome further engagement between MBIE, Auckland Museum, and our colleagues at Canterbury Museum and Otago Museum on how to delineate collections of significance and ensure they are appropriately funded. We acknowledge that a balance between Crown and local authority funding would need to be found, although suggest here that it would be appropriate in principle to split funding contributions according to a national / local benefit split.

In summary, we would support a Crown base grant funding model to research organisations if it:

- supports research activities undertaken by museums (and similar institutions) that are of national or international importance and / or contribute to national policy goals;
- supports the costs of operating and facilitating access to nationally significant infrastructure / assets, specifically including the maintenance and development of collections (as outlined above);
- takes the form of an annual bulk opex grant with specified outputs agreed between the organisation and MBIE each year;
- provides medium-term certainty of funding (e.g. a three-year horizon), with regular opportunities for adjustment;
- provides a mechanism for, or incentivises, partnerships and collaborations between organisations (e.g. facilitating CRIs and universities to partner with museums and archives);
- incentivises workforce development, investment in research skills, and developing early career researchers and Māori researchers;
- incentivises community engagement and involvement in research.

If the level and terms of base grant funding were appropriate, then it is likely that such a model would improve the stability and resilience of organisations. We note that, in our experience, secure baseline funding is often a catalyst for attracting additional sources of funding for research (e.g. philanthropic or partnership funding). In the case of the Museum, dedicated central government funding would, in the long-term, likely be more sustainable than our current reliance on local authority and philanthropic funding.

We acknowledge that some extant funding models (for example PBRF in the tertiary sector) have shortcomings in prioritising research track records over current outputs.

Designing and implementing a new funding model must be undertaken via consultation with organisations who undertake research and house critical research infrastructure, including the institutions that the national research system tends to overlook and not currently support, such as Auckland Museum. We would appreciate the opportunity to participate in such conversations.

NGĀ HINONGA | INSTITUTIONS

Museums have unique resources for basic research, particularly in areas that are unique to New Zealand. We are a kaitiaki for 4.5 million objects in our globally significant collections, which span Documentary Heritage (photographs, paintings, drawings, manuscripts, oral histories and personal papers), Human History (objects from New Zealand, the Pacific and the World) and Natural Sciences (specimens primarily from New Zealand and the Pacific). Notably our Māori and Pacific collections - which include objects from documentary heritage, human history and natural sciences - are among the most significant in the world.

In addition, more than one million objects are publicly accessible via Collections Online, and our online collection currently grows by 2,000 records every month.

Taken together, these resources provide unique opportunities for RSI in New Zealand. By being aware of these resources, and by strengthening connections between the tertiary and CRI sectors and museums, we can identify synergies and catalyse RSI that may not otherwise have been possible. Additional connections that need to be valued by the RSI system include connections to community expertise – those knowledge holders, experts, that are not necessarily represented in more traditional academic circles.

Selected examples of unique research resource and opportunity at Auckland Museum that will contribute to the NZ RSI system include:

- **Biodiversity and taxonomy.** Natural Sciences collections which provide unique insights into New Zealand and South Pacific biodiversity, including how biodiversity has changed over time. New Zealand's long isolation has resulted in a unique biodiversity. Research into biodiversity, taxonomy and biosystematics will aid future evidence-based conservation of our unique and diverse species and will help to understand the influences of introduced species.
- **Human impacts.** Archaeology collections which provide unique insight into the broad and accelerating impacts of humans on the environment. Use of these collections as a resource for research will help amass the evidence required to influence changing cultural perspectives so that environments and landscapes can be protected and restored.
- **Identity.** Documentary heritage collections enable research into the experiences of migrant communities – in a contemporary context and across time. Auckland Museum has a programme that involves working with artists, writers, and poets who use documentary heritage collections as a source to reflect and critique changes in society.

Resources such as these provide unique RSI opportunities for New Zealand and represent areas within which NZ has a unique opportunity to become a world leader.

We believe it is important for the RSI strategy to explicitly recognise the importance of public engagement and knowledge translation as core parts of RSI. This should be reflected in the infrastructure and funding mechanisms – supporting, facilitating, and incentivising genuine public engagement with RSI. Our position is that museums and more broadly the broad sector encompassing galleries, libraries, archives and museums can accelerate, diversify and strengthen public engagement with research – effectively and democratically connecting research to the public, and the public to RSI.

He orange tangata ka ao / Enriching lives: Inspiring discoveries is the vision of Tamaki Paenga Hira Auckland Museum. This vision reflects our paerewa – importantly in this context our role as a place of innovation, curiosity, learning and research. As a civic institution within a growing and increasingly diverse population we know there is a need to enhance and maintain a shared sense of belonging. In this context, we emphasise the role museums can play within communities as places to go for information debate, and discussion about the issues facing our society and environment.

We view public engagement as a ‘two-way’ process where on the one hand, the public can interrogate and explore current research, learning from subject experts and understanding where and how research is applied within society and on the other hand researchers and more broadly the RSI system can learn from and respond to public perspective. This would include creating opportunity for RSI specialists to listen to and develop greater understanding of those who are not specialists.

Our view is that an important aspect of the RSI system contributing to transitioning to a clean, green carbon-neutral New Zealand is through effective and compelling public engagement around new approaches, opportunities, technologies and research.

In addition to high quality public engagement with research as a priority for strengthening RSI contributions to transitioning to a clean, green, carbon-neutral New Zealand, museum collections offer other unique opportunities for basic research that will contribute to this goal. For example, Auckland Museum's Natural Science collections present an ideal resource to understand changes in biological diversity over time – basic knowledge which is critical to understanding and responding to the impacts of climate change. We emphasise the need to support biodiversity and taxonomy infrastructure so that we can discover and document all species in NZ. This is the foundation of all studies on NZ's unique biodiversity and is an important aspect of understanding the effects of climate change on species and ecological communities – thus also informing transition to a clean, green, carbon-neutral New Zealand.

Institutions such as museums are ideally placed to play a role in engaging the public in research and in enabling dialogue about RSI – a critical aspect of an RSI system that supports and accelerates transformational change and consequently progress toward government priorities. As New Zealand's oldest research and collecting institution, established in 1852, Auckland Museum is recognised as a primary site of investigation. Our research is vital to the kaitiakitanga of the Museum's taonga and collections, and to ensuring that Auckland Museum is a place for all to reflect on the past, embrace the present, and look towards the future. Central to our research is our 4.5 million object heritage asset that enables research engagement through harnessing the power of collections to interrogate wider social questions. In addition, the Auckland Museum Library Te Pātaka Mātāpuna is one of New Zealand's major research libraries, creating an access point for the Museum's Documentary Heritage collections. This unique combination of resources enables a research approach that is interdisciplinary, collaborative and connected. We have diverse and specialised expertise that covers applied arts and design, archaeology, archives, biological sciences, conflict and peace, earth sciences, ethnology, photography, and social history. Taken together, our collections and our expertise create unique opportunity for research which will support the RSI system.

We note also that Museums are a good site for facilitating and enabling cross-disciplinary understandings – examining and interrogating a topic, object, collection or problem with multiple and diverse lenses. This creates a resource for the RSI system that could enhance connectivity and novel approaches to problem solving.

Our view is that progress towards the Government's priorities could be accelerated by engaging with the museum sector in a strategic and intentional manner to facilitate public engagement with research. We recognise our role as a civic institution who has a trusted voice within society, that we have broad reach to diverse communities and to formal learners. Taken together this creates unique opportunity to connect research to the public and to formal learners. Accordingly, we suggest that opportunity exists for the NZ RSI system and community to partner with museums to facilitate compelling and effective public engagement in research and more broadly in knowledge translation. Specific mechanisms within the RSI system to encourage, broaden and accelerate public engagement in RSI would be one way of accelerating the progress toward Government priorities. It is also useful to note that museums are both civic and social spaces. This means that it is often social interactions that are a primary driver of visitation –

learning is an additional outcome as part of this broader context. The value of this is that public engagement with research through a museum setting can reach a broader audience than more traditional approaches to translating research knowledge.

Museums are not mentioned in this section despite their contribution to knowledge exchange through external databases e.g., online partnerships have led to the Museum's objects being viewed 55 million times in the last financial year on websites such as Flickr, Pinterest, Digital New Zealand, Wikipedia and the Biodiversity Heritage Library. Auckland Museum is a centre of excellence for the Biodiversity Heritage Library, in partnership with the Smithsonian Libraries and institutions globally, enhancing international scientific research through the provision of digital information about the endemic natural heritage of Aotearoa and the biodiversity of our flora and fauna.

By way of example, Auckland Museum is the first Aotearoa New Zealand partner to The Biodiversity Heritage Library². This partnership will dramatically increase access to and knowledge of Aotearoa's unique natural environment. The new RSI model needs to strengthen such partnerships and catalyse partnerships between CRIs, universities and museums. One part of such partnerships will be the facilitation of knowledge exchange - an integral part of all research. This is articulated through Auckland Museum's research vision, which is not just about generating knowledge, but also about sharing knowledge – with Museum audiences, with research partners and with communities.

Auckland Museum is also committed to:

- a knowledge strategy that interweaves mātauranga Māori, Pacific knowledge systems and research practice.
- a research implementation plan specifies pathways towards identifying specific outcomes and benefits for Māori and Pacific students, researchers and communities.
- research management infrastructure to enable the integration of mātauranga Māori and iwi partnership into research proposals, activities, and dissemination.

Knowledge exchange should be supported through the adoption of open access goals for all publicly funded research within Aotearoa New Zealand, not just for the creation of new knowledge but to avoid the wasteful duplication of research into existing knowledge that has not been made public. An important feature of Auckland Museum's approach to knowledge exchange and promotion of open access and open science is its policy of "Open by default; closed by exception". In practice this means that information and data is open to the public unless there are specified reasons for it to be closed e.g. copyright law, privacy considerations, geolocation of endangered species, cultural considerations, and indigenous data sovereignty. We note there are existing frameworks to support an open knowledge exchange system.³ Auckland Museum supports New Zealand Government Open Access and Licensing Framework.

TE HANGANGA RANGAHAU RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

We have set out above the need for Crown funding for metropolitan museum collections, which we consider to be an important part of national research infrastructure, although limited our

² <https://blog.biodiversitylibrary.org/2018/11/bhl-welcomes-the-auckland-museum.html>

³ <https://www.nature.com/articles/sdata201618> and <https://www.gida-global.org/care>

discussion there to operational funding for collection care, development, and research access. We think such support should be part of an annual operational expenditure base funding grant.

There is also a need for a new mechanism for Crown capital investment in research infrastructure, particularly one that provides an avenue for funding non-Crown organisations that do not have ready access to Government's Budget bid process. By way of example, we note that Te Papa received funding in Budget 2021 for a business case to replace its spirit collection area (i.e. its "wet" collections). Auckland Museum has no such access to the Budget bid process, despite having a similar need to upgrade storage for its wet collection, an important resource for natural science research.

We have considered the following mechanisms for funding research infrastructure:

1. An annual asset renewal and maintenance payment for named infrastructure as part of an organisation's base funding grant. This would be negotiated between the Crown and each research organisation and reviewed periodically (e.g annually or triennially in line with the opex grant).
2. An annual contestable capital grant funding pool open to non-Crown organisations for infrastructure replacement or investment in new research infrastructure. This could be for small projects / infrastructure / equipment of national importance (e.g. capped at an arbitrary figure such as \$1m capex).
3. Providing an avenue for non-Crown research organisations to work with MBIE on budget bids for new infrastructure or replacement infrastructure. This would focus on larger capital investments.

We think all three of these mechanisms have value, by addressing different parts of the investment and asset maintenance spectrum, and should be implemented as a package. In determining investments through any of these mechanisms, the Crown should have regard to:

- encouraging collaboration between research institutions and with communities
- avoiding duplication where possible
- targeting investments towards infrastructure that directly contributes to national research priorities.

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