

#74

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Page 2: Section 1: submitter contact information

Q1

Name

David Eccles

Q2

Email address

Privacy - 9(2)(a)

Q3

Yes

Can MBIE publish your name and contact information with your submission?
Confidentiality notice: Responding "no" to this question does not guarantee that we will not release the name and contact information your provided, if any, as we may be required to do so by law. It does mean that we will contact you if we are considering releasing submitter contact information that you have asked that we keep in confidence, and we will take your request for confidentiality into account when making a decision on whether to release it.

Q4

Yes

Can MBIE contact you in relation to your submission?

Page 3: Section 2: Submitter information

Q5

Individual

Are you submitting as an individual or on behalf of an organisation?

Page 4: Section 2: Submitter information - individual

Q6

Yes

Are you a researcher or scientist?

Q7

Age

Privacy - 9(2)(a)

Q8

Gender

Q9

In which region do you primarily work?

Q10

Ethnicity

Page 5: Section 2: Submitter information - individual

Q11

What is your iwi affiliation?

Privacy - 9(2)(a)

Page 6: Section 2: Submitter information - individual

Q12

Respondent skipped this question

If you wish, please specify to which Pacific ethnicity you identify

Page 7: Section 2: Submitter information - individual

Q13

Independent research organisation

What type of organisation do you work for?

Q14

No

Is it a Māori-led organisation?

Q15

Biological sciences,

Which disciplines are most relevant to your work?

Health sciences

Q16

It does not contain Mātauranga Māori

What best describes the use of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in your work?

Page 8: Section 2: Submitter information - organisation

Q17

Respondent skipped this question

Organisation name

Q18

Respondent skipped this question

Organisation type

Q19

Respondent skipped this question

Is it a Māori-led organisation?

Q20

Respondent skipped this question

Where is the headquarters of the organisation?

Q21

Respondent skipped this question

What best describes the use of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) in your organisation?

Page 9: Section 3: Research Priorities

Q22

Priorities design: What principles could be used to determine the scope and focus of research Priorities?(See page 27 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Priorities should not be assigned. Researchers should be free to work on whatever they want (within proper guidelines relating to ethical research). Attempts to set priorities means that research will always necessarily be following, rather than leading, because there needs to be a consultation about priorities, discussion/communication of those priorities, integration of those priorities with funding guidelines, funding review, and finally the research itself. All this takes a lot of time, time that could be better spent carrying out leading-edge research rather than waiting for funding.

In addition, targeted priorities always benefit established, experienced researchers more than underestimated or emerging researchers. If we aim to create a diverse research workforce, we need to give equal opportunity to researchers who do not know every little detail about how to get money for their research.

Q23

Priority-setting process: What principles should guide a national research Priority-setting process, and how can the process best give effect to Te Tiriti?(See pages 28-29 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Priorities should not be assigned; research areas should not be restricted based on what the current research community believes to be high-priority research. Such an approach will only entrench existing views, and will not create the diverse research landscape that represents a healthy research environment.

The best way of applying the principles of Te Tiriti is to leave Māori researchers to decide on their own priorities for research. A racist system cannot properly assign priorities for diverse, equitable research.

In light of this, the priority-setting process should be as follows:

1. Ask researchers what they want to work on
2. If the proposed research is obviously unethical, start a discussion around concerns before the research begins
3. Otherwise, allow the research to take place, and maintain discussions to identify any potential ethical concerns during the course of the research
4. Get out of the way of the researchers: let them do their own thing, make mistakes, and discover amazing things

Q24

Operationalising Priorities: How should the strategy for each national research Priority be set and how do we operationalise them?(See pages 30-33 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Priorities should not be set, or operationalised, or utilised, or specificationised, or otherwise nounised.

Research ideas and priorities should emerge from people and communities, not distant high-up organisations.

Page 10: Section 4: Te Tiriti, mātauranga Māori, and Māori aspirations

Q25

Engagement: How should we engage with Māori and Treaty Partners?(See page 38 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Give them money. Make sure that Māori researchers are given *at least* as much funding for research (per researcher) as white men. Ideally, they should be given *more*, in acknowledgement of the free consultation that Māori provide to researchers all the time, and the additional time requirements for family support.

Q26

Mātauranga Māori: What are your thoughts on how to enable and protect mātauranga Māori in the research system?(See pages 38-39 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Leave it to Māori to find out how to be Māori. Don't try to force shoehorned faux-Māori concepts onto all research, especially not onto Māori-led research.

In order to make sure that all research considers Māori perspectives, require that all research includes a named Māori principal investigator.

Q27

Regionally based Māori knowledge hubs: What are your thoughts on regionally based Māori knowledge hubs?(See page 39 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

If these are Māori-led, and emerge from Māori communities, then this is a good idea.

Before Te Rauparaha moved across Aotearoa, there was a massive established knowledge hub in Wairau (near the Wairau bar). People came from all over the country to learn, then return back to their local villages to pass on their aquired knowledge. This is how it used to be; this is how it should be.

https://twitter.com/gringene_bio/status/1165408994791280640

Talk to Kevin Wayne Abbott (Otago University) to find out more about this.

Page 11: Section 5: Funding

Q28

Core Functions: How should we decide what constitutes a core function, and how do we fund them?(See pages 44-46 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Targets and filters are a waste of time and administration. Researchers should not be paid based on their function; they should be paid because they are researchers. Anything beyond this will lead to bias, inequity, and exclusion.

The only question that matters is whether or not someone is a researcher. This needs to be a low bar, so that part-time researchers who have other responsibilities (e.g. looking after children, free consultation) are also included.

Q29

Yes

Establishing a base grant and base grant design: Do you think a base grant funding model will improve stability and resilience for research organisations?(See pages 46-49 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Q30

Establishing a base grant and base grant design: How should we go about designing and implementing such a funding model?(See pages 46-49 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

1. Work out the current median yearly gross income for white male researchers (including any additional funding from grants / awards)
2. Pay all researchers that amount, regardless of how much time you think they spend on research
3. Return to step 1. It's unlikely that the median salary for all researchers will exceed that of white male researchers, but if it does, use the previous year's amount and adjust for inflation.

The only question that matters is whether or not someone is a researcher. This needs to be a low bar, so that part-time researchers who have other responsibilities (e.g. looking after children, free consultation) are also included

Page 12: Section 6: Institutions

Q31

Institution design: How do we design collaborative, adaptive and agile research institutions that will serve current and future needs?(See pages 57-58 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

By letting researchers create their own collaborative networks, and removing any identified barriers that discourage this. Researchers should be free to move around into different areas (both physically and operationally). Researchers should be free to travel to different institutes to learn additional skills from the experts in those skills. Forcing researchers to stay within particular institutions in order to maintain their research standing will not encourage an adaptable research workforce.

Research is naturally multi-disciplinary; removing competition and encouraging collaboration will naturally lead to collaborative, adaptive and agile research.

Q32

Role of institutions in workforce development: How can institutions be designed to better support capability, skill and workforce development?(See page 58 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Remove competition from *everything*. Let people do the things they want to do (as long as they are ethically appropriate). Allow people to travel as needed to different places to learn from others.

Q33

Better coordinated property and capital investment: How should we make decisions on large property and capital investments under a more coordinated approach?(See pages 58-59 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

We shouldn't do this. A "more coordinated approach" is the opposite of what will work well for diverse, distributed research.

I would like to see each researcher provided with a small slice of capital allocation (e.g. a virtual currency), which they can combine with other researchers who share their research interests. A million dollar machine would then require enough researchers to stand behind it, support it, and allocate their capital to that machine.

Q34

Institution design and Te Tiriti: How do we design Tiriti-enabled institutions? (See page 59 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Require Māori leaders. Accept that Māori should have sovereignty over their environment, and that Māori leaders should *at least* be a requirement for an institution to exist within Aotearoa.

Q35

Knowledge exchange: How do we better support knowledge exchange and impact generation? What should be the role of research institutions in transferring knowledge into operational environments and technologies?(See pages 60-63 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

The purpose of research institutions should be to remove barriers to research, so that researchers can get on with doing research and communicating their findings back to the community that asked for the research to be carried out. Researchers should be able to do this free from harassment, and free from any concerns that they might lose their job if they didn't perform well enough, or didn't produce the right results.

Institutions should not create additional barriers to research or communication. They should not enforce rules over the way that scientists communicate their research or results. They should not require particular outputs in order to keep researchers on their books.

Page 13: Section 7: Research workforce

Q36

Workforce and research Priorities: How should we include workforce considerations in the design of national research Priorities?(See pages 69-70 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

We shouldn't design any national research priorities. Priorities will always be guided by the existing research system, which is not agile or adaptable, and benefits the viewpoints and opinions of established researchers over diverse & emerging research.

Q37

Base grant and workforce: What impact would a base grant have on the research workforce?(See pages 70-71 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Universal funding (i.e. base grant) will have the best outcome in terms of success per dollar spent, over any other filtered / prioritised funding allocation. When working out how to implement universal basic funding, the "universal" part is more important than the "basic" part.

<https://arxiv.org/abs/1802.07068>

Q38

Better designed funding mechanisms: How do we design new funding mechanisms that strongly focus on workforce outcomes? (See page 72 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Stop competitive funding.

I believe in an academic future that is diverse, open, and non-competitive. The core issue with competitive funding is that it requires an increasing amount of effort, year on year, for people to get the same amount of money. As that effort is increased, less privileged people (who can't afford to spend more money/effort) lose out.

The Marsden Fund is the most lucrative fund in Aotearoa, and yet the amount of money provided to researchers is not sufficient to support their salary (let alone their additional research costs). Furthermore, the costs involved in applying for a Marsden Grant (when considering the funding success rate) exceed the awarded amount. These costs will only increase due to the competitive nature of the award: assuming research skill improves over time, the skill level (and associated cost) required to be awarded will also increase over time.

A strange game. The only winning move is not to play.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s93KC4AGKnY>

Removing the competitive nature of funding would remove at least systemic waste caused by researchers trying to continually one-up each other to get a slice of the pie.

Instead, we should have a low, fixed threshold for acceptance (i.e. constant from year to year), followed by universal distribution of available funds to everyone who passes that threshold. This makes the targets predictable (allowing people to know in advance whether they have a good chance of getting funded), and creates a much fairer distribution of funds that has no preference for white men, established researchers, peer review bias, or "safe" research (all of which are a problem with the current peer-reviewed system, see <https://doi.org/10.38126/JSPG180105>).

Page 14: Section 8: Research infrastructure

Q39

Funding research infrastructure: How do we support sustainable, efficient and enabling investment in research infrastructure?(See pages 77-78 of the Green Paper for additional information related to this question)

Instead of giving money to research institutions, give it to iwi; they seem to have a pretty good idea of how to efficiently allocate resources, given how little money they are given at the moment in contrast to other organisations.

The idea of a centralised institute with a common purpose is an old, stale, colonial idea. Research is diverse and distributed; it needs to be funded from the ground up in order to benefit the most people.
