

14 March 2022

Future Pathways Policy Team
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
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Wellington 6140

Tēnā koutou,

On behalf of the College of Creative Arts Toi Rauwhāangi, Massey University Te Kunengi ki Pūrehuroa, I am pleased to submit our response to MBIE's Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways Green Paper.

We thank MBIE for the opportunity to respond to your vision for a modern, future focused research system that is Tiriti-led. Our staff have been motivated by, and engaged with, this response paper. We look forward to contributing to MBIE's policy design process as the White Paper is developed.

Ngā mihi nui,



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Preamble

Toi Rauwhāangi College of Creative Arts (CoCA) is a Faculty of Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University. It is the oldest and most comprehensive Creative Arts tertiary provider in Aotearoa and comprises three schools: Ngā Pae Māhutonga School of Design (est. 1886), Whiti o Rehua School of Art (est. 2002) and Te Rewa o Puanga School of Music and Creative Media Production (est. 2015). It employs 80+ research staff, including many who are nationally and internationally renowned in their fields. It is a thriving, well-resourced and inspiring environment for research and learning.

CoCA has a particular focus on what it means to be a creative practitioner in the cultural and geographical context of Aotearoa New Zealand, with an emphasis on growing Māori and Pacific arts and artists in ways that recognise and enact rangatiratanga. From this grounding, and within an ethos of care and respect, it is committed to growing new creative arts practice, knowledge and understanding that engages with significant domestic and global challenges and has positive impact in the world.

1. Relationship with PBRF

While the PBRF is out of scope for this green paper, we wish to comment on the relationship between this system and the Research, Science and Innovation system. Much of our feedback has stemmed from discussions with researchers regarding the ongoing PBRF consultations. While the two systems are funded differently, both attest to valuing “excellent research” and are thus intertwined.

CoCA was one of the top performers in our fields in the 2018 PBRF round - and was the top performing College in the University - but this acknowledgement of excellence has not been matched by success in the traditional research funding environment. PBRF acknowledges and values creative practice as research, but even in Aotearoa’s most “blue-sky” funding pool – the Marsden fund – creative arts, music and performance are not funded as research processes in and of themselves. Indeed, universities and colleges largely self-fund this research, with limited assistance from arts and broadcast content funds (see Section 5 of this response). As external research funding is deemed an additional measure of research excellence in PBRF outputs, and is rewarded directly through the External Research Income incentive, the two systems rely on each other to create an overarching research ecosystem.

Although definitions of research and research excellence are not yet set for PBRF 2025, generally previous PBRF definitions of research excellence – and particularly Māori and Pacific research excellence – has been far more expansive and encompassing than the definitions in the MBIE systems. It is pleasing to see that the green paper states “we take a broad definition of research for the purposes of this paper” and “the term ‘research’ when used as a single word should read to encompass all activities usually understood as such, including but not limited to research into the arts and humanities, social research, and natural sciences.” This is a promising step from prior MBIE documentation, which has often used the term “science” in place of “research”. We see this green paper as an excellent opportunity for the RSI system to connect more closely with how the PBRF defines and measures excellence, noting that the last PBRF review strongly advocated for the implementation of even broader definitions. An easy step to align this would be to recognise that

research could be both *into* the arts, but also *through* the arts, thus legitimising arts practices and processes as legitimate modes of research, as does the PBRF.

2. Our place in the Pacific

We question why there is no thought given to the importance of the location of Aotearoa in the Pacific within the green paper. Māori and Pacific researchers at Toi Rauwhāangi agree with the green paper that our research system should be Tiriti-led. However, it should also acknowledge that we live, work and research in the Pacific. Recent PBRF changes acknowledge the value and importance of research undertaken by, with and for Pacific peoples (for example, increasing weightings for Pacific researchers) but the green paper does not reflect this.

Pacific researchers face similar challenges to Māori researchers (see Section 4 of this response). They are overburdened and often have unrealistic expectations of cultural service placed upon them. How the research system traditionally measures excellence – both excellence in research, and excellence in individual standing – can conflict with Pacific values and knowledge systems. Like Māori, Pacific researchers are often led by their community’s needs: less importance is placed on the Eurocentric, individualistic interpretation of innovation, and instead on how ancestral knowledges can be applied to modern problems, especially problems that are results of colonial activity that disproportionately affect Māori and Pacific people.

The fact that Pacific researchers are underrepresented in research organisations should also be acknowledged. Work should be undertaken to include them in the research system, and to ‘reach out’ to meet Pacific research needs and institutions. This should happen in a way that does not undermine their integrity and experience, combined with developing and improving a research infrastructure that can acknowledge, support, and champion their research. We suggest that Pacific peoples are specifically included, acknowledged, and consulted with in future MBIE consultation papers and processes.

3. Ngā Whakaarotau Rangahau | Research Priorities

3.1 What principles could be used to determine the scope and focus of research priorities ?

It is pleasing to see the paper endorse multi-disciplinary approaches in the formation of research priorities. We note that the paper states the priorities will “include social research” but would challenge MBIE to expand this vision further, and to acknowledge the transformative outcomes that can happen when creative arts approaches are applied to our most pressing problems.

MBIE’s 2021 [Research, Science and Innovation Report](#) (p. 17) stated that New Zealand specialises in seven research areas, of which Creative Arts and Writing is one. Any transformative research priorities must leverage and value this expertise. The importance of creative arts innovations is often misunderstood; when we are funded with ‘impact’ in mind, this is often in the *service of* other disciplines rather than as key contributors; as translators or partners that smooth the way for or improve perceptions of STEM researchers.

At all levels of research priority setting and implementing, diversity will be crucial: in ethnicity, gender, career stage, research expertise, and community background. In the past, the defining of what is considered ‘critical’ research has often been made by privileged groups. Only diversity at all levels of a system will challenge these pre-existing notions.

3.2 What principles should guide a national priorities setting process?

CoCA first and foremost supports a Tiriti-led RSI system. From this, we are open to further exploring the following overarching principles:

- Partnership: prioritise co-development and co-governance with Māori and Pacific researchers and communities
- Capacious research definitions: value the importance of Māori, Pacific, social and creative research practices
- Diverse workforce: ensure non-scientists are deeply embedded in the process of priority setting

3.3 How should the strategy for each research priority be set and how do we operationalise them?

The paper states that “Research excellence will remain an important guiding principle of the RSI system but will look different in different research contexts. Research Priorities will need to value different modes of excellence, depending on the field and type of research being undertaken.” Again, we would emphasise that a full range of research – reflective of those submitted to PBRF – are valued and incorporated into strategies and operations.

This should include not just creative practice, but also community-based practice that is conducted by Māori and Pacific researchers, including those not employed in standard tertiary or CRI institutions. Such diversity of research and practitioners should be actively recruited at all levels, from governance to research assistance, so that that internal decisions about what research is funded and conducted remains wide-ranging and open-minded.

4. Te Tiriti, Mātauranga Māori me ngā Wawata o te Māori

4.1 How would you like to be engaged through the Future Pathways Programme?

We suggest that MBIE provide culturally safe spaces (Māori led, and prioritising tikanga) for Māori and Pacific researchers to hui together instead of individually reading long documents. Funding and resources should be provided to recognise their contributions.

We also note that Māori and Pacific peoples are diverse, and need to be understood in the context of their diverse aspirations and lived experiences. This should be acknowledged explicitly in future papers and processes.

MBIE should also ensure that a diverse range of research disciplines are represented in engagement. MBIE’s 2021 [Research, Science and Innovation Report](#) (p. 90) states that **the**

two fields with the highest proportions of Māori researchers are Māori knowledge and development, and visual arts and crafts. This statistic should not be ignored when considering what a Tiriti-led, mātauranga Māori inclusive RSI system looks like. Without representation from these fields, a significant proportion of Māori researchers may not feed back into the system re-design. It is important to note that many of these researchers do not see a place for them in the current system, and MBIE should make additional efforts to ensure that this systemic bias is not continued. This should include investing in Māori to establish Māori creative arts research entities, and enabling them to develop appropriate Māori cultural methodologies and systems to meet their aspirations within such entities.

Finally, feedback from Māori researchers at CoCA indicates that many feel they are “over-consulted” without changes being enacted. These researchers already perform a cultural double-shift. Because of these extra demands some find it difficult to make time to digest lengthy documents (particularly if they feel previous feedback hasn’t been seen, heard, considered, or led to any changes), and to know what processes are most important to contribute to.

4.2 What are your thoughts on how to enable and protect Mātauranga Māori in the research system?

Mātauranga Māori has the huge potential to do, and to be, good. Mātauranga Māori can embrace the future, new and ancestral knowledges, and adapt and evolve.

To enable and protect Mātauranga Māori in the research system, the system itself needs to be Tiriti-led. Rather than ask how Māori research and researchers can be included in the RSI system, should MBIE instead be considering how a Tiriti-led system will account for non-Māori research? Power should be shared and where necessary, handed over, in governance and operations at all levels.

It is also possible to better protect a taonga like mātauranga Māori by planning for it. There will soon be larger cohorts of ākonga Māori and rangatahi Māori coming through Aotearoa’s education system with big questions and a new vision for the future. Our tertiary, research, and government systems need to be ready to protect and enable them, and work in conjunction with other government agencies. There are significant changes under way across education, workforce and research systems. Where possible these should be aligned and complementary. For example, the Ministry of Education is investing in increased Māori medium pathways and implementing the Ka Hikitia Māori education strategy ([see actions for Tertiary here](#)). Tertiary institutes, and the research they fund and are funded to undertake, should be prepared to support and welcome more Māori graduates from these systems into the research system.

Barriers to participation in the system are many: Māori researchers are more highly represented in precarious employment (see, for example, the [Precarious Academic Workforce 2021 Interim Report](#)); others work regionally; others have not pursued the Western academic aspiration of completing a doctorate. Māori within the system regularly

perform a cultural double-shift, are under increased burden and have significant constraints placed on their time. New structure and systems should not perpetuate these limitations.

Funding managed by Māori, for research led by Māori, that fully incorporates and where appropriate, centres Māori research methodologies, should be significantly increased. Current funding systems are often administration-heavy; we encourage MBIE to consider and implement ways to reduce administrative burden, particularly for applications and funds that are Māori-centred.

Vision Mātauranga should be assessed by those with appropriate expertise. We acknowledge there is a shortage of appropriate assessors – could these assessors be funded more appropriately to recognise their contributions? Could MBIE look at different assessment models; for example, what if all applicants to a fund were required to assess each other’s work, or hui about it together? Would this reduce competitiveness and encourage deeper collaboration and support of Māori researchers and their knowledges? We also acknowledge the groundbreaking Vision Mātauranga strategy is now fifteen years old and should be re-evaluated and possibly refreshed.

In enabling Mātauranga Māori, the system should embrace the widest possible definitions of what constitutes research and be non-restrictive in terms of what constitutes Māori knowledge. Often Māori research excellence is not about *ownership* or *originality* but values continuity and sustained knowledge. This can act in contrast to MBIE’s current alignment of “innovation” and “transformation” with “excellence”. Additionally, intergenerational transfer of knowledge systems is dependent on the recovery and revitalisation of mātauranga that has been impacted by colonisation; therefore, the process of continuing and sustaining knowledge often requires substantial research to re-embed it into current contexts and technologies. Finally, Māori and Pacific knowledges are often centred on, and derived from, service to communities, not funding agencies.

In response to some of the paper’s specific suggestions:

- A leadership or advisory body(ies): this could be appropriate, provided that these bodies are not limited by the factors outlined above
- Integrating Mātauranga Māori experts across key organisations and agencies: this is already happening to some extent, and we would suggest that if an organisation or agency is not already prepared to resource these positions themselves, it is unlikely the position would have great success. Many organisations have struggled to find appropriate staff to fill these roles, and so addressing this workforce gap may be a better focus area
- Mechanisms to coordinate Mātauranga Māori expertise: this could be one way of reducing administrative workload and burden on Māori researchers

4.3 What are your thoughts on regionally-based Māori knowledge hubs?

As a general principle, CoCA supports the establishment or support of regionally-based Māori knowledge hubs. This would be one way to ensure that regional diversity, mana and regionally specific knowledge systems are acknowledged and represented. Regional hubs

also provide opportunities for rangatahi to see research and career pathways: they are near, visible, and relevant to them.

There should be a focus on authentic, embedded research that is happening where it is needed and where it is meaningful. MBIE should ensure that researchers who are not affiliated with “standard” research organisations are embraced within such a system, and that diverse creation and research practices are included and valued.

However, any regionally-based approach would also need to acknowledge the diaspora; Māori who are urbanised, affected by multi-generational bias and loss, who may not have access to iwi and hapū or to specific cultural capacity.

5. Te Tuku Pūtea | Funding

There are several considerations that are important to CoCA in regards to implementing a ‘base funding’ model.

First, we note that the green paper describes universities are described as agile relative to CRIs, presumably because of our diversified income (i.e. we already have ‘base funding’ because of the SAC and fees system). We are thus unsure how this perception would translate to university access to base grants outside collaborations with CRIs. It is important to note that the use of SAC funding to underwrite research activities is not protected in legislation, and thus ‘base funding’ for research is not guaranteed for tertiary organisations.

Second, CoCA is currently not in the position of receiving significant “traditional” research income, despite our PBRF success. Many of the funders that support Creative Arts practice do not come under MBIE’s remit (for example, Creative New Zealand). While their intention is not to fund research, research outputs are often produced as a result of such funding (as there is a significant crossover between what constitutes ‘practice’ and ‘research’). These funders virtually never fund staff time (some explicitly refuse to) and it is even rarer that they fund overheads. This means CoCA is subsidising research activities and outcomes using SAC funding and fees, in a way that other university-based research disciplines are not required to do, due to the funding models they can access.

Thus the provision of a base grant to tertiary institutions (and removing overheads from “traditional” competitive funding sources) *may* work towards providing a fairer and more equitable playing field between creative arts researchers and those working in STEM fields.

We note that many researchers in different organisations spend a significant amount of time seeking funding for “BAU” activities, and we would endorse approaches that reduce this burden and enable truly innovative projects and ideas to be funded via contestable processes. However, MBIE should be careful that by introducing a base funding model, the administrative burden is not shifted elsewhere in the system (e.g. to increased reporting or internal bidding for the use of base funding).

We endorse the government's goal to significantly increase the national R&D expenditure to at least 2% of GDP.

6. Te Hunga Mahi Rangahau | Workforce

We agree there are significant issues of workforce development across the research sector. We encourage MBIE to consider how they can influence participation from diverse workforce groups, especially Māori and Pacific researchers, but also including those moving to academia from industry, researchers working outside STEM fields, and specialist researchers working outside traditional frameworks. Currently, the system perpetuates a certain measure of excellence; even the CV templates that accompany funding and fellowship applications prioritise publications and traditional academic outputs over other achievements.

Funding models that prioritise underrepresented groups are desirable; for example, the processes underpinning the Te Whitinga Fellowships. This would reflect the PBRF's recognition of Māori and Pacific research via increased contribution weighting. If base grants are implemented, one of their conditions should be the direct support of longer-term positions for diverse post-doctoral candidates.

With regards to including researchers outside STEM fields in the RSI system, we advise MBIE to explicitly include all research areas in all funding schemes, including the creative arts. While such research is sometimes implicitly considered eligible, the prevalence of the word "science" in funding terminology is a clear deterrent to applicants and perpetuates the exclusion of certain disciplines (indeed, the notion of a "post-doctoral fellow" in the creative arts is a rare one).

MBIE should also acknowledge that workforce development is a pipeline (or to use a better analogy, a braided river) that starts at undergraduate level, runs through post-graduate study, to post-doctoral and early career positions. It should incorporate communities and industry as part of this development. The ecology should support transferable skills, but the burden of articulating value should not just be on researchers – as the home of business and employment in Aotearoa, MBIE has the opportunity to implement this themselves by communicating with and preparing businesses and industries for the opportunity and value that doctoral graduates provide. Structural problems of exploitation in precarious employment (or gig) economy must also be addressed.

The voices of Early Career Researchers responding to the green paper should be prioritised, and resourcing and funding for ECR participation should be given – unlike those in permanent employment, ECRs may not have the capacity to commit to a system re-design without such support.