

Strategic Investment Area Development Group: Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND: The New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017–2027

On 22 June 2017, the Minister of Health and the Minister of Science and Innovation launched the first New Zealand Health Research Strategy (the NZHRS). The Strategy sets out a vision that:

By 2027, New Zealand will have a world-leading health research and innovation system that, through excellent research, improves the health and well-being of all New Zealanders.

The purpose of the NZ Health Research Strategy 2017–2027 is to “collectively increase the impact of health research” by four strategic priorities:¹

1. *Invest in excellent health research that addresses the health needs of all New Zealanders;*
2. *Create a vibrant research environment in the health sector;*
3. *Build and strengthen pathways for translating research findings into policy and practice; and*
4. *Advance innovative ideas and commercial opportunities.*

The NZHRS has four guiding principles: research excellence, transparency, partnership with Māori, and collaboration for impact.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE), the Ministry of Health, and the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) will lead the implementation of these priorities.

Action 1: Prioritise investments through an inclusive priority-setting process

The NZHRS sets out 10 actions to achieve its vision of a world-leading health research and innovation system. The first is *'Action One: Prioritise investments through an inclusive priority-setting process'*. The NZHRS states that the priorities should respond to the current and future needs of the NZ population, and that they should guide government funding for health research, including through the HRC, the National Science Challenges, and research commissioned by government and health-sector agencies. *“Other funding mechanisms in New Zealand’s health research and innovation system, such as academic institutional funding and the Marsden Fund, will continue to support curiosity-driven health research that may or may not fit with the priorities set.”*

The NZHRS tasks the HRC – as the Government’s primary funder of health research – with leading the implementation of Action One, with support from MBIE and the Ministry of Health. The HRC has designed an inclusive priority-setting process, based on a review of methodology used in other relevant systems, and on consultation with a range of interested stakeholders. The process has been approved by the Steering Group for the NZHRS, which comprises senior officials from

¹ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Health (2017). New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017–2027. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment and the Ministry of Health. ISBN 978-1-98-851786-5

MBIE, the Ministry of Health, the HRC, and Callaghan Innovation, with representation from District Health Boards and Universities NZ.

The health research priorities identified by this process will be termed Strategic Investment Areas (SIAs) and they will endure for the 10-year duration of the NZHRS. Within the identified SIAs, the specific gaps in knowledge and capability will be further defined as Themes. These Themes will be reviewed every 3 to 5 years to enable responsiveness to dynamic factors such as the burden of disease, research opportunities, and the evidence needs of NZ's health system. As part of the inclusive priority-setting process, the HRC will establish an independent Development Group, which will be tasked with developing and refining SIAs and Themes, with input from stakeholders across the health, science, and innovation sectors.

Terms of Reference for the Strategic Investment Area Development Group

1. Purpose of the Group

- 1.1 The purpose of the Development Group is to provide recommendations to the HRC Council and to the NZHRS Steering Group on priorities for health research in New Zealand. Recommendations will be made sequentially to the HRC Council and then NZHRS Steering Group. The NZHRS Steering Group will have final sign-off on these priorities at three stages during the agreed process, before the draft and final priorities are approved by Ministers or seen by the public.

2. Functions of the Group

- 2.1 The functions of the Development Group shall be to—
 - a. independently review information and evidence to support the development of draft SIAs and Themes for consultation, according to the information provided and parameters set by the HRC, with guidance from the Steering Group;
 - b. independently review feedback obtained during public consultation to refine and develop the draft SIAs and Themes;
 - c. work with additional subject-matter experts to independently review information and evidence to support the refinement and development of draft SIAs and Themes;
 - d. recommend SIAs and Themes, with justification, to the HRC Council and the NZHRS Steering Group;
 - e. help to communicate the approved SIAs and Themes across the health, science, and innovation sectors, and encourage their uptake, including justifying the decisions made on the basis of available evidence, agreed criteria, and inclusive consultation; and
 - f. perform any other functions that are agreed between the HRC and the Development Group.
- 2.2 Development Group members will draw on their experience and knowledge of government goals, operation of Crown entities, health research, science and innovation, and the health sector in carrying out the above functions. The Development Group may

work with the HRC to call on experts to give advice on specific questions and to form subgroups to define and refine priorities at the level of Themes.

- 2.3 The Development Group will uphold the NZHRS Guiding Principles of research excellence, transparency, partnership with Māori, and collaboration for impact. The Development Group will operate in accordance with the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi.

3. Composition and membership of the Development Group

- 3.1 The Development Group will comprise a maximum of 13 members. Members of the Development Group will:

- a. be selected for their mana, knowledge, and expertise; and
- b. reflect the diversity of New Zealand's health research and innovation systems, with representation from the health, research, tertiary education, Māori, Pacific, disability, end-user, and commercial sectors.

- 3.2 The members of the Development Group will be identified with input from the HRC Council and from the NZHRS Steering Group, and appointed by the HRC. Each member of the Development Group will be appointed for a renewable term of 2 years.

- 3.3 The HRC may also appoint additional experts, in consultation with the Development Group and with input from the NZHRS Steering Group, to form subgroups to define and refine priorities at the level of Themes.

- 3.4 Once the Development Group is established, the Steering Group will select two Co-Chairs, one of whom is Māori.

- 3.5 A quorum shall comprise at least seven members of the Development Group, including both Co-Chairs. Decisions will be made by consensus. If consensus on an issue cannot be reached, decisions will be made by majority vote. If a vote is split, the two Chairs shall have casting votes. If the vote is still split, the Co-Chairs must advise both the HRC Council and the NZHRS Steering Group when they make their recommendations to these bodies for approval.

4. Meetings of the Development Group

- 4.1 Members of the Development Group will need to be available to meet five times over a 2-year period. Meetings will be scheduled well in advance, face-to-face or via high-quality videoconference facilities, and each will run for 2 full days. For each meeting, the HRC will prepare summaries of key information, including public submissions, advice from selected experts, and relevant policies and data. Members of the Development Group will need to allow sufficient time to read this material in advance of each meeting, and to review the recommendations of the meeting. The total time commitment will be 10 days over the 2-year period for face-to-face meetings, plus approximately 4 days of reading and preparation.

- 4.2 Co-Chairs will need to allocate additional time, as they will need to present the recommendations of the Development Group up to three times throughout the process to the NZHRS Steering Group and the HRC Council.
- 4.3 The HRC will support all meetings of the Development Group and ensure that minutes are kept. All meeting minutes will be anonymised and published online within 1 month of the meeting. The HRC will work with the Co-Chairs to:
- a. support the effective operation of the Development Group to deliver according to agreed milestones,
 - b. provide records of meetings and disseminate them, and
 - c. prepare reports with the agreement of the Development Group.

5. Term of Office

- 5.1 The Development Group will continue to meet, when convened by the HRC, throughout the duration of the NZHRS (2017–27), although membership may vary over this period.

6. Reporting to the Steering Group and HRC Council

- 6.1 The Co-Chairs of the Development Group shall report their recommendations and any material findings to the next scheduled meetings of the HRC Council and the NZHRS Steering Group, or to the Chairs of these bodies. The Development Group should present its advice in written form and may also be asked to discuss it directly with the HRC Council and the NZHRS Steering Group.
- 6.2 The minutes of all Development Group meetings shall be provided to the HRC Council and to the NZHRS Steering Group as soon as possible, and within 1 month of each meeting.

7. Observers

- 7.1 The following organisations may send one representative to each meeting of the Development Group in the capacity of observers:
- a. Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE)
 - b. Ministry of Health
- 7.2 These observers:
- a. are required to comply with these Terms of Reference, including the requirements of confidentiality and conflicts of interest; and
 - b. do not count towards a quorum and do not have a vote.

8. Confidentiality and conflicts of interest

- 8.1 Members of the Development Group should keep confidential all information and documents shared at meetings aside from those which are able to be made available on the website for transparency purposes. Members should not make public announcements

about the recommendations of the Development Group until these have been reviewed and approved by the HRC Council, the NZHRS Steering Group, and Ministers.

- 8.2 Members of the Development Group will perform their functions in good faith, and with impartiality, and will avoid situations that may lead to conflicts of interest. Members of the Development Group who face potential conflicts of interest, or perception of a conflict, will advise the Co-Chairs, who will ensure that all conflicts are managed appropriately.

9. Review

- 9.1 These Terms of Reference will be reviewed every 2 years, if not before.