



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

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Review of the Performance-Based Research Fund: Final Report

Portfolio **Education**

On 24 May 2021, following reference from the Cabinet Economic Development Committee, Cabinet:

Background

- 1 **noted** that:
 - 1.1 the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF) allocates \$315 million per annum to tertiary education organisations to reward and encourage high quality tertiary education research and research-led teaching;
 - 1.2 the PBRF was reviewed by an independent panel, who were guided by the Terms of Reference approved by Cabinet [SWC-18-MIN-0121] and engaged extensively with the sector;
- 2 **noted** that the Minister of Education agrees with the panel that the fundamentals of the PBRF are working well, with a measured improvement in research quality in the tertiary research sector;
- 3 **noted** that on 22 July 2020, the Cabinet Social Wellbeing Committee agreed that targeted consultation be undertaken with the sector from August to November 2020 on potential changes to the PBRF [SWC-20-MIN-0102];
- 4 **noted** that following sector feedback, the Minister of Education is proposing a number of changes to the PBRF to strengthen the Fund;

Proposed changes

- 5 **agreed** to adding the following new objective to the PBRF:

Support a robust and inclusive system for developing and sustaining research excellence in Aotearoa New Zealand;

- 6 **agreed** to refresh the guiding principles of the PBRF by replacing the previous Cultural Inclusiveness principle, with the following three principles:
- 6.1 Partnership: the PBRF should reflect the bicultural nature of Aotearoa New Zealand and the special role and status of the Treaty of Waitangi / Te Tiriti o Waitangi;
 - 6.2 Equity: different approaches and resources are needed to ensure that the measurement of research excellence leads to equitable outcomes;
 - 6.3 Inclusiveness: the PBRF should encourage and recognise the full diversity of epistemologies, knowledges, and methodologies to reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's people;
- 7 **agreed** to support Māori researchers and research in the PBRF by:
- 7.1 increasing the subject area weighting for Evidence Portfolios assessed by the Māori Knowledge and Development peer-review panel from 1 to 3;
 - 7.2 applying a funding weighting of 2.5 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Māori staff;
- 8 **agreed** to support Pacific researchers and research in the PBRF by:
- 8.1 increasing the subject area weighting for Evidence Portfolios assessed by the Pacific Research peer-review panel from 1 to 2.5;
 - 8.2 applying a funding weighting of 2 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Pacific staff;
- 9 **agreed** to fix a minimum allocation for Te Pūkenga in the next Quality Evaluation round in 2025 at 90 percent of the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics allocation from the 2018 round;
- 10 **agreed** to amend the External Research Income component by:
- 10.1 increasing the weighting for external research income in the 'Overseas Research Income' category from 1.5 to 3.5;
 - 10.2 increasing the weighting for external research income in the 'New Zealand Non-Government Income' category from 2 to 4;
- 11 **noted** that the Tertiary Education Commission is in the process of appointing a Sector Reference Group for the 2025 Quality Evaluation;
- 12 **invited** the Minister of Education to direct the Tertiary Education Commission, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group for the 2025 Quality Evaluation, to design and implement the following final changes to the PBRF:
- 12.1 broadening the PBRF definition of research by:
 - 12.1.1 rewording the PBRF definition of research;
 - 12.1.2 making changes to the Evidence Portfolio submitted by staff in the Quality Evaluation to complement the new PBRF definition of research;
 - 12.2 reviewing the extraordinary circumstances qualifying criteria;
 - 12.3 simplifying the new and emerging qualifying criteria;

- 13 **noted** that to support the proposed policy changes to the PBRF, the Minister of Education will direct the Tertiary Education Commission to:
- 13.1 consider how best to appoint a Sector Reference Group for the 2025 Quality Evaluation that demonstrates a strong commitment to Māori-Crown partnership and comprises a diverse membership;
 - 13.2 discontinue reporting the Average Quality Score metrics.

Michael Webster
Secretary of the Cabinet