

In Confidence

Office of the Minister of Education

Cabinet Economic Development Committee

FINAL REPORT BACK ON THE REVIEW OF THE PERFORMANCE-BASED RESEARCH FUND

Proposal

- 1 This paper provides a final report back on the Review of the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF), and seeks Cabinet agreement for changes to be made to the PBRF.

Relation to Government priorities

- 2 The Government's Speech from the Throne committed to laying the foundations for a better future. The proposed PBRF changes contribute to this objective by promoting a stronger, fairer, more diverse tertiary research system that helps us grow and share New Zealand's research with our communities.

Executive Summary

- 3 The PBRF allocates \$315 million per year to our tertiary education organisations through a mixed performance-assessment regime designed to reward and support high quality tertiary education research and research-led teaching.
- 4 As part of the Education Work Programme, I agreed to a Review of the PBRF. This was an opportunity to examine government support of research, and to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the fund. Terms of Reference agreed by Cabinet covered a wide range of key research issues.
- 5 I appointed an independent panel ("the panel"), chaired by Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, to carry out the Review of the PBRF. The panel engaged extensively with the tertiary education and research sectors to inform its final recommendations, which were provided in January 2020.
- 6 The panel concluded that the fundamentals of the PBRF are working well, and made recommendations to build on the successes of the fund that reflect Government's equity and wellbeing objectives; vision for a sustainable and diverse research workforce; and commitments to Māori-Crown partnership.
- 7 As agreed by Cabinet [SWC-20-MIN-0102 refers], the Ministry of Education carried out targeted sector consultation from August to November 2020 on a range of options for the PBRF, based on panel recommendations.

- 8 As recently noted in my Education Work Programme 2021 [SWC-21-MIN-0015 refers], the changes I am proposing are informed by panel recommendations and sector feedback.
- 9 With these changes, I intend on striking a balance between system shifts and the cost of change for our tertiary education organisations (TEOs) and researchers. This is particularly important as we continue to manage the complex challenges of COVID-19.
- 10 This paper is being considered alongside the Minister for Research, Science and Innovation's Cabinet paper on future pathways for the Research, Science and Innovation system, which aligns with my proposed changes to the PBRF.

Background

- 11 The PBRF is a bulk funding mechanism, designed to encourage and reward high-quality tertiary education research, across all subject areas and types, in degree-granting TEOs.
- 12 The PBRF does not fund or purchase research directly but supports research, including post-graduate teaching and supervision, and is currently accessed by all of the universities, two of the wānanga, Te Pūkenga and a small number of private training establishments. PBRF funding supports a wide range of different research that provides economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits to New Zealand.
- 13 A capped pool of \$315 million per year, the PBRF employs both peer review processes and performance measures. There are three different components within the PBRF:
- 13.1 The **Quality Evaluation component** (55% of the fund) is based on a periodic assessment of the research performance of staff at eligible TEOs. TEOs present staff research in Evidence Portfolios that are assessed for quality by expert peer review panels. The next round is scheduled for 2025.
- 13.2 The **Research Degree Completions** component (25% of the fund) is an annual measurement of the number of PBRF-eligible postgraduate research-based degrees completed at participating TEOs. This helps to capture the connection between research staff and research training.
- 13.3 The **External Research Income component** (20% of the fund) is an annual measurement of the amount and type of income received by participating TEOs from external sources for research purposes.

The Review of the Performance-Based Research Fund

- 14 As part of the Education Work Programme I committed to review the PBRF. Terms of Reference agreed by Cabinet covered a range of aspects including revisiting the objectives of the PBRF, ensuring that it adequately supports the full spectrum of research activity and supports a diverse research workforce.

- 15 I appointed an independent panel, chaired by Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, to carry out the Review of the PBRF. The panel engaged extensively with the tertiary education and research sectors to inform their recommendations, which they provided in January 2020.
- 16 I heard from the panel that the fundamentals of the PBRF are working well, with a measured improvement in research quality since the PBRF's establishment in 2002.
- 17 However, I also heard from the panel that there is scope to build a better system that reflects our Government's commitments to equity and wellbeing outcomes and our vision for a sustainable, diverse and representative research workforce. There is also an opportunity to ensure PBRF settings support a tertiary system that enhances the relationship between Māori and the Crown, and that honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- 18 The importance of addressing these issues has only been enhanced by the impacts of COVID-19.

I am proposing changes to strengthen the Performance-Based Research Fund

- 19 Overall, my proposed changes will strengthen and build on the successes of the PBRF while also prioritising continuity, stability and clarity for our tertiary education system.
- 20 The Government signalled in its Manifesto that we will continue our investment in innovation, including research and development. The PBRF plays a role in this as the main mechanism of Government funding for tertiary education research capability.
- 21 Sector feedback has strongly informed the changes I am proposing. I have also considered the relationship of my proposals to the strategic direction we have set for the education system, and likely changes in PBRF funding allocations from each proposal.
- 22 Through these proposed changes I seek to:
- 22.1 Support a holistic approach to recognising and rewarding research;
 - 22.2 Better reflect the partnership between Māori and the Crown;
 - 22.3 Recognise and build on the growing diversity in New Zealand; and
 - 22.4 Address existing inequities experienced in different aspects of tertiary research, research assessment and by researchers themselves.
- 23 Some of my proposed changes rely on sector expertise and experience for their implementation. I am seeking Cabinet approval now to allow ample time for sector collaboration on the implementation of these changes, ahead of the 2025 Quality Evaluation.

- 24 These changes support the Tertiary Education Strategy and are aligned with Ka Hikitia¹ and the Action Plan for Pacific Education².
- 25 I am proposing nine changes to the PBRF, as detailed below and summarised in Annex 1. These include final changes to be approved by Cabinet for immediate implementation (listed below as 1 - 6). These also include changes to be implemented by the Tertiary Education Commission, in consultation with sector experts (listed as 7 - 9).

Proposed Final Changes to the Performance-Based Research Fund

1. Adding a new objective to the PBRF

- 26 The PBRF is designed to support excellent tertiary research and to increase the sector's capability in influencing and driving new knowledge production and social change, and using that research to inform teaching and learning. This is expressed as the objectives of the fund.
- 27 To promote a holistic approach to research excellence, I propose the following new objective be added: *support a robust and inclusive system for developing and sustaining research excellence in Aotearoa New Zealand*. I also propose as part of this change that *Aotearoa* be included alongside *New Zealand* in the other objectives to reflect the bicultural nature of our tertiary system.

2. Refreshing the PBRF guiding principles

- 28 The guiding principles help give effect to the PBRF objectives and are used as the foundation of the fund's implementation. In the current guiding principle *Cultural inclusiveness*, bicultural partnership and diversity are conflated.
- 29 The panel's report and sector feedback supported the idea that these principles can be updated to better reflect the partnership between the Crown and Māori, and to promote equity, diversity and inclusiveness. I propose three new principles replace *Cultural inclusiveness*:
- 29.1 **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.
- 29.2 **Equity**: different approaches and resources are needed to ensure that the measurement of research excellence leads to equitable outcomes.
- 29.3 **Inclusiveness**: the PBRF should encourage and recognise the full diversity of epistemologies, knowledges, and methodologies to reflect Aotearoa New Zealand's people.

3. Supporting Māori researchers and research in the PBRF

- 30 The panel and sector consultation highlighted ongoing concerns that the PBRF does not adequately recognise and reward participating wānanga and

¹ Ka Hikitia – Ka Hāpaitia | The Māori Education Strategy is a cross-agency strategy for the education sector.

² The Action Plan for Pacific Education 2020-2030 sets five focus areas for change in the education system.

their staff, Māori staff across the tertiary system, and kaupapa Māori research and mātauranga Māori.

- 31 To better support and recognise Māori researchers and research I propose:
- 31.1 Increasing the subject area weighting³ for Evidence Portfolios assessed by the Māori Knowledge and Development panel from **1 to 3**
This is intended to reflect the complexities and costs associated with this research, and provide a tangible expression of partnership.
- 31.2 Applying a funding weighting of **2.5** for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Māori staff
This is intended to recognise the significance of Māori researchers in tertiary education, and strengthen financial incentives linked to building a representative workforce and system.
- 32 Taken together, these changes are intended to:
- 32.1 Reflect our commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi;
- 32.2 Ensure the PBRF contributes to Māori-Crown partnership;
- 32.3 Support proposed changes to PBRF objectives and guiding principles;
- 32.4 Contribute towards growing the intellectual infrastructure to support mātauranga Māori in the education system; and
- 32.5 Support ongoing Māori education work, including through Ka Hikitia.
- 33 While this recommendation will likely shift some funding to participating wānanga, the PBRF will likely remain inconsistent with the way wānanga engage in and are funded for research. 9(2)(j)

4. Supporting Pacific researchers and research in the PBRF

- 34 There are also ongoing concerns that the PBRF does not adequately recognise and reward Pacific researchers and research, and Pacific staff have reflected similar concerns to those raised by Māori staff.
- 35 To better support and recognise Pacific researchers and research, I propose:
- 35.1 Increasing the subject area weighting for Evidence Portfolios assessed by the Pacific Research panel from **1 to 2.5**
- 35.2 Applying a funding weighting of **2** for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Pacific staff⁵.
- 36 It is critical that the tertiary education workforce reflect the diversity of New Zealand society, and the PBRF has a role to play as a major fund.

³ Subject-area weightings are applied to Evidence Portfolios assessed in the Quality Evaluation.

⁴ Following the 2012/13 review of the PBRF, Government established the Wānanga Research Aspirations project to identify solutions to address and support wānanga research. 9(2)(j)

⁵ Where staff are both Māori and Pacific, the higher funding weighting will apply.

37 The underrepresentation of Māori and Pacific researchers and the undervaluing of mātauranga Māori, kaupapa Māori research and Pacific research are distinct, albeit interconnected, issues. Implementing my proposed subject-area and ethnicity-based weightings sends a strong signal that we are committed to addressing both.

38 While these proposed changes will not resolve all the concerns that have been raised by Māori and Pacific staff I believe it is appropriate to seek opportunities to support Māori and Pacific researchers and research from within PBRF settings, as well as through other avenues.

5. Fixing a minimum allocation for Te Pūkenga in the next Quality Evaluation round

39 The 2025 Quality Evaluation will be the first Te Pūkenga participates in, as a new entity.

40 Contingent on its participation in the 2025 Quality Evaluation, I propose that a minimum proportion of 2025 Quality Evaluation funding allocated to Te Pūkenga be fixed at *90% of the proportion allocated to Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics in the 2018 Quality Evaluation*.

41 Should Te Pūkenga exceed this minimum, this will be recognised in its funding allocation. I believe this strikes an appropriate balance between safeguarding and incentivising participation by Te Pūkenga in the PBRF.

6. Amending the External Research Income component

42 The External Research Income component is used to allocate 20% of the fund, and is an annual measurement of the amount and type of income received by TEOs from external sources for research purposes.

43 To rebalance the fund and to lower transaction costs, the panel recommended the External Research Income component be discontinued. However, sector responses from consultation showed mixed feedback and demonstrated this component has merits that can be strengthened.

44 To strengthen the External Research Income component and support incentives linked to overseas and non-Government collaboration, I propose the following amendments to the External Research Income component⁶:

44.1 Increasing the weighting for external research income in the *Overseas Research Income* category from **1.5 to 3.5**

44.2 Increasing the weighting for external research income in the *New Zealand Non-Government Income* category from **2 to 4**

⁶ To take effect from 1 January 2022. The External Research Income component is calculated using the previous three years data, so requires a longer lead-in time for full implementation.

Proposed Changes to be designed and implemented by the Tertiary Education Commission

- 45 Before each Quality Evaluation, the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) appoints a Sector Reference Group comprising members from across tertiary and research sectors. This group is currently being established.
- 46 The Sector Reference Group will advise the TEC on the operation and design of the PBRF, contributing critical sector expertise and knowledge towards the implementation of Cabinet's decisions on the PBRF. Sector Reference Group recommendations are developed as part of a public consultation process.
- 47 In addition to the above proposed changes, I am also proposing changes that require further design and implementation work to be carried out by the TEC, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group. I believe this makes good use of the experience and expertise throughout our tertiary and research sectors, in implementing the following changes.

7. Broadening the PBRF definition of research

- 48 I propose to direct the TEC to implement a broadening of the PBRF definition of research through two distinct design elements:

Rewording the PBRF definition of research

- 49 The PBRF definition of research is intended to be broad, and was expanded ahead of the 2018 Quality Evaluation to include creative, commercial and applied research activity. The panel recommended expanding this definition of research to broaden the Quality Evaluation assessment framework. This is intended to:

- 49.1 Better support a broader range and diversity of research being recognised and rewarded by the Quality Evaluation;
- 49.2 Allow for a focus on quality rather than quantity;
- 49.3 Better recognise collaboration and engagement, particularly with end-users; and
- 49.4 Emphasise excellence and promote inclusion.

- 50 Sector feedback showed support for broader recognition and rewarding of diverse research throughout the system – including the PBRF. Concerns about the implementation of this change were also raised, including:

- 50.1 How research 'excellence' can be defined in ways that are relevant across disciplines, institutions, and international academic and research communities;
- 50.2 How to promote the inclusion of early and mid-career researchers;
- 50.3 Potential conflation of impact and/or engagement with excellence; and
- 50.4 That this is a good opportunity to ensure the PBRF definition of research is consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations.

- 51 I propose to direct the TEC, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group, to redefine the PBRF definition of research to encompass the production of research, engagement, and impact relating to that research; and support diverse research cultures.

Making changes to Evidence Portfolios

- 52 As part of the Quality Evaluation, TEOs submit Evidence Portfolios that are compiled by eligible research staff. These Portfolios are assessed by subject-specific peer-review panels, based on the quality of the research and related activities across research outputs and evidence of research contributions.

- 53 The panel made recommendations for changes to the Evidence Portfolios to support a broadened PBRF definition of research. This proposed change provides more space for consideration of collaboration, engagement, and impact, without the need for new assessment methods or metrics.

- 54 There will be panel and discipline-specific aspects to the design of these changes to determine how best to balance consideration of the *production of research, engagement and impact* with accurate assessment.

- 55 I propose to direct the TEC, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group, to make changes to the Evidence Portfolios that will collectively support the rewording of the PBRF definition of research. This will involve design and implementation work across three aspects of Evidence Portfolios:

- 55.1 Replacing the Nominated Research Output section with an *Examples of Research Excellence* section.

This section will allow staff to include up to four examples of research excellence, including traditional outputs and an accompanying narrative to ensure peer-review panels are able to understand and interpret the work. This is not intended to remove the focus on research outputs, and there will still be a minimum threshold of outputs.

This is intended to be more inclusive of early and mid-career researchers, and a wide range of research activities and cultures. This should ensure that in the assessment of outputs, there is capacity to consider research production and engagement, and resulting impacts.

- 55.2 Replacing the current Other Research Output section with an *Other Examples of Research Excellence* section.

This is intended to address the same issues as the new *Examples of Research Excellence*, and will complement that new section.

- 55.3 Reviewing the *Research Contribution* component with a view to complement the new *Examples of Research Excellence* section.

The TEC and Sector Reference Group will consider if changes to this component are needed to complement the new *Examples of Research Excellence* section.

8. Revising the Extraordinary Circumstances qualifying criteria

- 56 The *Extraordinary Circumstances* category allows for the assessment of researchers who have experienced circumstances that have seriously affected their quantity of research and related activities. To qualify, researchers must detail their circumstances to peer-review panels, enabling evaluation of negative impact on their quantity of research or related activities.
- 57 The 2018 Quality Evaluation results showed women were employed part-time (16.4%) more often than men (8.0%), and were much more likely to apply for Extraordinary Circumstances consideration due to personal leave and significant family/community responsibilities.
- 58 Both the panel and sector feedback argued that these provisions are too restrictive and frame many circumstances and experiences in problematic, deficit-based ways.
- 59 I propose to direct the TEC, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group, to revise the Extraordinary Circumstances qualifying criteria to:
- 59.1 Introduce a merit-relative-to-opportunity⁷ element to allow assessment of research quantity in ways that promote equity and inclusion;
 - 59.2 Ensure the process collects and evaluates information in a sensitive way, and limits the number of people with access to this information;
 - 59.3 Review and potentially remove the minimum threshold of three years;
 - 59.4 Allow for part-time employment to be considered more deliberately throughout assessment, including potentially in this category; and
 - 59.5 Take account of the negative impacts of COVID-19.

9. Simplifying the New and Emerging qualifying criteria

- 60 The *New and Emerging* category allows for early career researchers who may have had limited opportunities to engage in research and research-related activities to be recognised and funded under the PBRF. This supports tertiary workforce development with an additional funding weighting for eligible staff.
- 61 The panel found that this category has successfully provided ways to assess new and emerging researchers. However, it has been difficult for TEOs to manage and provide evidence for, resulting in administrative burdens and the exclusion of some researchers on counterproductive grounds. The panel recommended these criteria be simplified ahead of the next Quality Evaluation. This recommendation had strong sector support.
- 62 I propose to direct the TEC, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group, to simplify the New and Emerging qualifying criteria. Any changes should also align with the proposed changes to the PBRF definition of research.

⁷ Allowing for positive acknowledgement of achievement (considering quality and impact) given the opportunities available – as opposed to 'special' or 'extra' considerations which highlight negative impacts of circumstances or performance.

Implementation

- 63 For my proposed changes listed above as 7 - 9, the design and implementation of these changes is critical. Many aspects of these changes will require discipline-specific expertise, PBRF experience, and peer-esteem in respective fields and communities. These changes have the potential to improve the aspects of the fund that TEO staff engage with most directly.
- 64 To ensure ample time and resource for sector collaboration on design and implementation of these changes, the TEC is in the process of appointing a Sector Reference Group, which will meet following final Cabinet decisions.
- 65 This Sector Reference Group will provide advice and recommendations to the TEC on operational changes in the design of the 2025 Quality Evaluation. Recommendations will be developed as part of a public consultation process to best ensure that final changes address the operational concerns raised throughout consultation, and will utilise and recognise sector expertise.
- 66 To support these changes, I have directed the TEC to consider how best to appoint a Sector Reference Group that demonstrates a strong commitment to Māori-Crown partnership and comprises a diverse membership.
- 67 I will also direct the TEC to discontinue the reporting of Average Quality Score metrics⁸ for the next Quality Evaluation.

Implementation activity	Timeframe
Final Cabinet decisions to be communicated with the tertiary education sector.	Following Cabinet decisions in June 2021
Letter to be sent to the TEC, directing the design and implementation of changes 7 – 9.	Following Cabinet decisions in June 2021
The TEC will appoint the Sector Reference Group for the 2025 Quality Evaluation.	Concluded by July 2021
The TEC, in consultation with the Sector Reference Group, will design the operation of the 2025 Quality Evaluation.	Mid 2021 – Mid 2023
New guidelines for the 2025 Quality Evaluation will be issued to TEOs.	Mid 2023
Quality Evaluation.	2025

⁸ These metrics are intended to reflect research intensity and are reported after each Quality Evaluation. However, both the panel and tertiary sector strongly supported they be discontinued in favour of more robust reporting.

Financial Implications

- 68 There are no financial implications arising from this paper. Any future funding required will be sought through the Budget process.

Legislative Implications

- 69 There are no legislative implications arising from this paper.

Impact Analysis

- 70 A Regulatory Impact Analysis or Climate Implications of Policy Assessment is not required for this paper.

Population Implications

- 71 Many of my proposed changes seek to address existing inequities experienced in different aspects of tertiary research, research assessment and by researchers themselves. Currently, the percentage of researchers who identified as Māori when participating in the PBRF is 4.8% (as compared to 16.5% of the wider population) and for Pacific it is 1.4% (as compared to 8.1% of the wider population).
- 72 I anticipate my proposed changes for supporting Māori and Pacific research and researchers will have a positive impact on both the numbers and experience of Māori and Pacific researchers in our tertiary research system. I expect TEOs will react to the strong financial incentives proposed to recognise and support Māori and Pacific researchers and research.
- 73 My proposed changes to the *extraordinary circumstances* and *new and emerging* criteria will allow for assessment of our researchers in ways that promote equity and inclusion. This will provide more equitable assessment for part-time researchers, who are more likely to be female. It will also look to ensure that people with disabilities are equitably assessed. This is intended to support a broad range of researchers with a variety of cultures, identities, and experiences – including Māori, women, Pacific peoples and disabled people.

Human Rights

- 74 I consider these proposed changes to be consistent with the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and the Human Rights Act 1993.

Consultation

- 75 This paper has been prepared by the Ministry of Education. The following agencies have been consulted or provided input for this paper: Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment, the Tertiary Education Commission, Treasury, Te Puni Kōkiri, Ministry for Primary Industries, and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Communications

- 76 The Ministry of Education will communicate with TEOs, education system stakeholders and research system stakeholders on any final changes made.

Proactive Release

- 77 I propose that this paper is proactively released within 30 days of Cabinet decisions having been made, with any redactions in line with the provisions of the Official Information Act 1982.

Proactively Released

Recommendations

The Minister of Education recommends that Cabinet:

- 1 **Note** that the PBRF was reviewed by an independent panel, that considered the Terms of Reference approved by Cabinet in consultation with the sector
- 2 **Note** that I agree 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 **Note** that as approved by Cabinet, the Ministry of Education conducted targeted sector consultation from August to November 2020 on potential changes to the PBRF
- 4 **Note** that following sector feedback, I am proposing the following changes to be made to the PBRF to strengthen the fund
- 5 **Agree** to adding the following new objective to the PBRF:
 - 5.1 “Support a robust and inclusive system for developing and sustaining research excellence in Aotearoa New Zealand”.
- 6 **Agree** 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 **Agree** 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; and
 - 7.2 Applying a funding weighting of 2.5 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Māori staff.
- 8 **Agree** 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; and

- 8.2 Applying a funding weighting of 2 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Pacific staff.
- 9 **Agree** to fix a minimum allocation for Te Pūkenga in the next Quality Evaluation round in 2025 at 90% of the Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics allocation from the 2018 round
- 10 **Agree** 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; and
- 10.2 Increasing the weighting for external research income in the 'New Zealand Non-Government Income' category from 2 to 4.
- 11 **Note** that the Tertiary Education Commission is in the process of appointing a Sector Reference Group for the 2025 Quality Evaluation
- 12 **Agree** that I 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; and
- 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 **Note** that, to support the proposed policy changes to the PBRF, I 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.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Chris Hipkins

Minister of Education

Appendix 1: Summary of proposed changes for strengthening the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF)

Proposed changes to strengthen the PBRF		Proposed implementation and timing	Summary of sector responses
1.	Adding a new objective to the PBRF	Final decision to be made by Cabinet , to take effect this year when I reissue the funding determination	
2.	Refreshing the PBRF guiding principles		
3.	Supporting Māori researchers and research:	Final decision to be made by Cabinet , to take effect from the 2025 Quality Evaluation	
	Increasing the Māori Knowledge and Development subject area weighting to 3		
	Applying a funding weighting of 2.5 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Māori staff		
4.	Supporting Pacific researchers and research:		
	Increasing Pacific Research subject area weighting to 2.5		
	Applying a funding weighting of 2 for Evidence Portfolios submitted by Pacific staff		
5.	Fixing a minimum allocation for Te Pūkenga in the 2025 Quality Evaluation		
6.	Making amendments to the External Research Income component, to better recognise overseas and non-Government research income	Final decision to be made by Cabinet , to take effect from 1 January 2022	
7.	Broadening the PBRF definition of research excellence:	For Cabinet approval – final design and changes made by the TEC based on consideration of SRG advice and public consultation on its proposals , in time for the 2025 Quality Evaluation	
	Rewording the PBRF definition of research		
	Making changes to Evidence Portfolios		
9.	Revising the extraordinary circumstances qualifying criteria		
10.	Simplifying the new and emerging qualifying criteria		

Indicative key for tertiary sector responses to proposed changes:				
Strong support	Some support	Mixed responses	Some opposition	Strong opposition