



New Zealanders for
HEALTH RESEARCH

*Ngā Tāngata o Aotearoa mō
te Rangahau Hauora*

“New Zealand’s peak body representing the entire health and medical research pipeline”

Health Research Saves Lives

Ka Whakarauoratia te Hunga e te Rangahau Hauora



Annual Report
30th June 2022

Chair and Chief Executive Report

Health research is the single most important way in which we improve our health and healthcare - by identifying the best means to prevent, diagnose and treat conditions. Yet New Zealand's investment in health research is significantly less than what it should be, and our health system falls short when it comes to translating the results of health research into practice, policy and better health outcomes.

Tragically, these two shortcomings contribute significantly to New Zealand's increasing premature amenable and non-amenable premature mortality figures as presented in the Statement of Service Performance (SSP) section of the Annual Accounts.

New Zealanders for Health Research (NZHR) is committed to bringing about best possible health for all New Zealanders, and to this end we champion increased investment in health research as an essential and embedded component of all parts of New Zealand's health system, responsive to New Zealanders' unique health imperatives.

To this end we are pleased to report on NZHR's achievements for the year ending 30th June 2022.

Advocacy

Embedding health research as an essential component of the health system

The process of developing and passing in June 2022 the Government's health reforms legislation, aka the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act, provided what proved to be an ideal opportunity for NZHR to successfully argue for health research to be embedded as an essential component of the health system in order to save lives and improve health outcomes, including equity of outcomes.

The initial 2019 iteration of the report of Health and Disability System Review failed to make any mention of the role that health research should have in a reformed (or any) health system, the final version of the report neglected to include any specific recommendations to this effect, and this omission was repeated in the subsequent Health Reforms White Paper which was to foreshadow the content of the Pae Ora legislation itself. In response NZHR made an [unsolicited submission](#) to the Health Transition Unit (which produced the White Paper and was to draft the health reforms legislation), and also made [written](#) and [oral](#) submissions to Parliament's Pae Ora Legislation Committee.

NZHR was subsequently very pleased to see that the Pae Ora (Healthy Futures) Act requires Te Whatu Ora (Health New Zealand) and Te Aka Whai Ora (the Māori Health Authority) to “undertake and support research relating to health”, to “evaluate the delivery and performance of services provided or funded” by them, and to take into account the role of the Health Research Council in developing the New Zealand Health Plan. These are new and significant steps towards the embedding of health

research as an essential component of New Zealand’s health system which did not feature in the now obsolete previous legislation.

Although these steps are to be celebrated as important wins for NZHR’s advocacy there remains a continuing absence of requirements for services, programmes etc to be evidenced based, and for there to be a health research strategy. This is despite our best [efforts](#) directed to Health Ministers before the second version of the Bill was presented to the Committee of the Whole House for its final debate, and a submission on the Code of Expectations For Health Entities’ Engagement with Consumers and Whānau. We will therefore advocate directly to Te Whatu Ora, Te Aka Whai Ora and Manatū Hauora (Ministry of Health) to have these outstanding issues addressed.

NZHR also made a [submission](#) to the PHARMAC Review arguing among other things that PHARMAC should be required to actively engage with and positively respond to both the imperatives of the New Zealand Health Research Strategy and the emerging expectations of the wider research, science and innovation ecosystem.

We were pleased to see that the Review report recommended that PHARMAC retain its current research function, noted that it has an opportunity “to share its knowledge base more widely within the health sector”, and that PHARMAC should align itself with the priorities set out in the Health Research Strategy to “to ensure investments are aligned with areas of need, create a vibrant research environment in the health sector, build and strengthen pathways for translating research findings into policy and practice, and advance innovative ideas and commercial opportunities”.

Increasing health research investment

Throughout the year, as in previous years, and as informed and supported by successive public opinion polls (see the SSP), NZHR consistently advocated for government investment in health research to be increased from about 0.7% of health care costs to 2.4% over the next ten years. Our advocacy, which sought to achieve increased investment reflected in the Government’s 2022 budget, comprised an iterative process which was directed in turn to [MBIE](#), then to the [Minister of Finance](#) and finally to Parliament’s [Finance and Expenditure Committee](#) via written and oral submissions where we recommended that the Government’s Budget Policy Statement (BPS):

- Be amended so that the health section of the living standard framework:
 - affirms that the extent to which New Zealanders live to “a ripe old age” is the most fundamental of indicators of wellbeing, and
 - extends its focus on Covid 19 related mortality to premature mortality from all other causes
- Includes investment in R&D as one of the components of its fiscal strategy, including the government’s commitment to achieving its 2% of GDP target by 2027
- Includes “increasing levels of amenable and non-amenable premature mortality” as one of the issues that should be addressed by the BPS’s overarching goal of “laying the foundations for the future”

- Recognises that increased investment in health research is essential for both meeting the BPS’s wellbeing objectives of “supporting improved health outcomes for all New Zealanders” and embedding the health reforms, and to this end signals:
 - an allocation of an additional \$26m of specific and exclusive new health research investment in the 2022/23 budget, with an emphasis on mental health research
 - a commitment in the 2022/23 budget to a three year investment trajectory comprising further year on year increases in specific and exclusive new health research funding of an additional \$30.4m in 2023/24, a further additional \$35.6m in 2024/25, and a further \$41.7 again in 2025/26.
 - formal adoption of a ten-year 2.4% of government healthcare costs health research investment trajectory, representing increases of 17.1% per year

Although we have not yet been successful in gaining budgetary traction on the latter two bullet points we were encouraged to see an additional \$10m per year allocated for RNA research, and new Ministry of Health funding of \$23m for “health science research, leadership, analysis and publishing quality evidence, data and insights”. These allocations contributed the small increase in health research investment illustrated in the SSP.

As the financial year drew to a close we commissioned NZIER to identify the economic benefits of investing in health research in New Zealand, and we expect to use the results to refresh our campaigning for a better result in the 2023 Budget.

During the year NZHR has also taken opportunities to lift the profile and importance of clinical trials. We were pleased to see an uptick in commercial investment in clinical trials (depicted in the SSP) and look forward to seeing the fruits of our engagement with the HRC/MoH funded clinical trials infrastructure project.

Prioritising health research

In October 2021 MBIE released its Te Ara Paerangi Future Pathways Green Paper on the future of New Zealand’s research, science and innovation system. Following an NZHR facilitated health research sector workshop on 22nd February we [submitted](#) that:

- Imminent and serious risks to New Zealanders’ health and well-being should be key considerations when identifying research priorities
- There should be greater government investment in all forms of R&D including health research
- More work should be done to explore how the health research system can best uphold Te Tiriti obligations and opportunities
- The RSI system should dispense with current requirements for different research disciplines to compete with each other for scarce generic resources in favour of larger allocations associated with each research priority, with the actual amount and growth trajectory determined by the sector’s share of GDP, and potential for environmental impact, impact on health and wellbeing, and economic impact.
- There should be greater focus on pathways to impact

- A health CRI-like entity should be created to undertake and fund health and medical research, provide for health research workforce development and retention, and facilitate processes for translating research results into policy and practice
- Momentum in the implementation of the Government’s existing Health Research Strategy should be both maintained and lifted, with its principles incorporated into the forthcoming RSI White Paper

GMOs

With the support of the Malaghan Institute for Medical Research and MSD (Merck) NZHR presented written and oral [submissions](#) to Parliament’s Environment Committee on the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms (Hazardous Substances Assessments) Amendment Bill.

We argued that current assessment processes contribute to wasting of health research funding and unnecessarily delay opportunities for clinical trials patients to benefit from new therapies such as genetic modification of donor cells prior to reinsertion into a patient (such as for CAR T therapy), and genetic modification of foreign organisms into a therapeutic product for human use (such as for vaccine development).

Even though our submission was deemed as being out of the scope of this particular Bill it did contribute to the Ministry for the Environment (MfE) deciding to engage with key stakeholders in the New Zealand biomedical community to enable MfE to identify whether there may be unnecessary regulatory restrictions on biomedical R&D using GMOs.

Annual opinion polling

Following a gap year in 2021 NZHR’s sixth annual opinion poll was once again undertaken in May 2022, just after the release of the 2022 Budget. As in 2020 the poll was conducted by Kantar and comprised a sample of 1000 New Zealanders aged eighteen years and over. Key results are as follows.

- For the sixth year running respondents identified “improving hospitals and the health care system” as the top issue for the government to focus on over the coming two to three years. Furthermore, research to make our health system more effective and efficient was once again the top priority for health research. Yet only 28% thought that the new health sector reforms will be effective in bringing about improved health for New Zealanders.
- More funding for health and medical research was among kiwis’ top twelve issues for the government to focus on, as it has been for five out of our six polls. Seventy five percent agreed that government should invest more funding in health research, 66% said that the 2022 budget of \$173 million for health research (0.8% of health care costs) is too low, and only 9% supported government practice of investing less than 1% of health care costs into health research.

The report, subtitled “*health research system at crossroads*” and “*health research saves lives*”, is scheduled for publication in October 2022, and will inform our

continuing advocacy and public education activity. A selection of the results is presented in the SSP.

Health Research Saves Lives

We continued to publish a regular newsletter - *Ka Whakarauoratia te Hunga e te Rangahau Hauora!* - to keep approximately 900 stakeholders and NZHR members both informed as to NZHR's influence and successes and apprised of national and international developments relevant to health research in New Zealand. During the year we were pleased to have celebrated our 50th [issue](#).

Bruce Scoggins

It was with much sadness that we acknowledge the passing away of NZHR's inaugural patron, Doctor Bruce Scoggins, on Friday 18th March. It was Bruce's leadership and behind-the-scenes perseverance over several years which brought about the creation of New Zealanders for Health research in 2015, and he was appointed patron in 2019 in recognition of his contribution and legacy.

Membership

We gratefully acknowledge the support of members University of Otago, AUT, Cure Kids, Malaghan Institute for Medical Research, Merck Sharpe and Dohme (MSD) NZ, Roche Products NZ, AbbVie NZ, Douglas Pharmaceuticals, Multiple Sclerosis New Zealand, the Multiple Sclerosis Research Trust, Kantar and Research Australia,

Thanks too for the support of the NZHR Board who represent a cross section of NZHR members.

Finances

NZHR remains in a financially solvent position albeit that the SSP indicates a small fall in membership based revenue. Once again we anticipate that things will need to be carefully managed over the next twelve months, especially as the after effects of responding to Covid 19 continue to make recruitment of new paying members challenging.



Graham
Malaghan,
Chairperson



Chris
Higgins,
Chief
Executive

New Zealanders for Health Research Board



Graham Malaghan

Chair (from 14th December 2015; reappointed 25th November 2016; and 10th October 2019)



Frances Bengé

CEO - Cure Kids (from 14th December 2015; reappointed 12th October 2017; and 15th October 2020)



Peter Surman

Chief Scientific Officer, Douglas Pharmaceuticals (from 10th October 2019)



Scott Bannan

Senior Clinical Operations Manager Merck, Sharp & Dohme NZ (from 1st April - 1st September 2021)



Nadia Levin

CEO - Research Australia (from 14th December 2015; reappointed 25th November 2016; and 10th October 2019)



Derek Siegers

Head of Asia Pacific Global Clinical Trial Operations, Merck, Sharp & Dohme (from 1st September 2021)



Prof Nicola Kayes

Professor of Rehabilitation and Associate Dean/ Research Director, Centre for Person Centred Research, Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences - AUT (from 28th January 2021)



Dr Martin Gagnon

Director of Research and Enterprise - University of Otago (from 11th October 2018)

Patron



Dr Bruce Scoggins
(10th October 2019 - 18th March 2022)

Statement of Service Performance 2021/22

Vision: best possible health for all New Zealanders

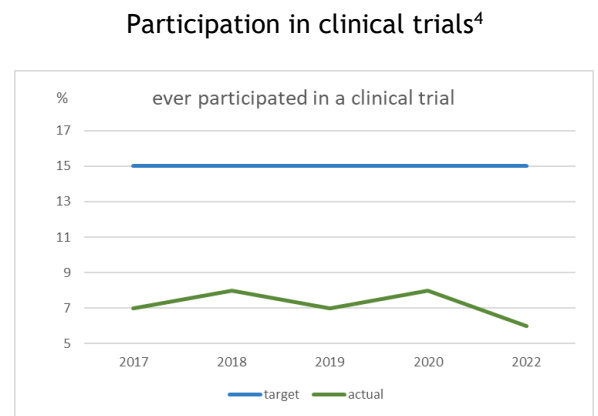
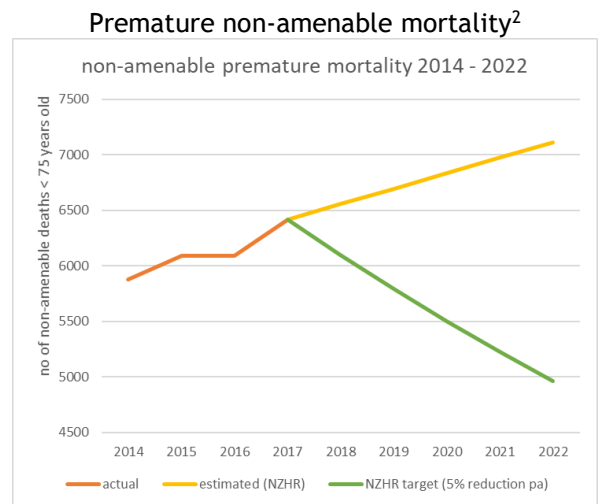
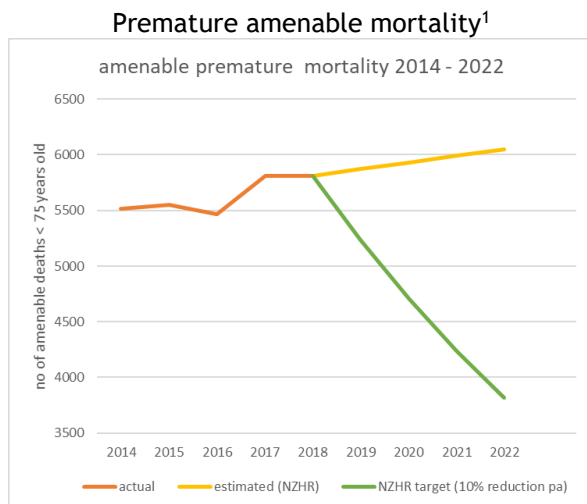
Mission: to champion increased investment in health research as an essential and embedded component of all parts of New Zealand’s health system, responsive to New Zealanders’ unique health imperatives

NZHR has identified a set of targets and success measures to assist in identifying its impact in terms of carrying out its mission to achieve its vision.

This statement of service performance should be read in conjunction with NZHR’s Chair/Chief Executive report for the year.

Strategy: Embed health research as an essential component of New Zealand’s health system

Impact measures

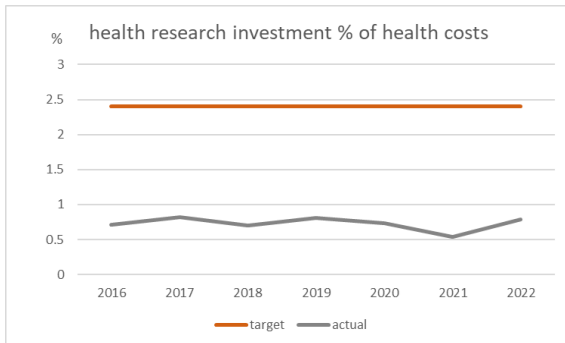


¹ [amenablemortality_2016_dhb_ethnicity_years_rates_summary_202106.xlsx \(live.com\)](https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/mortality-2017-data-tables)
² <https://www.health.govt.nz/publication/mortality-2017-data-tables> and earlier tables
³ NZHR opinion polling
⁴ Ibid.

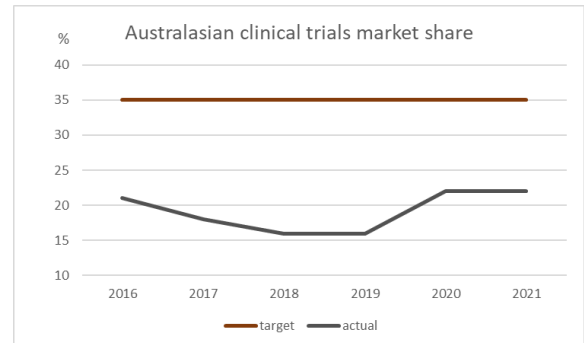
Strategy: Increase health research investment

Impact measures

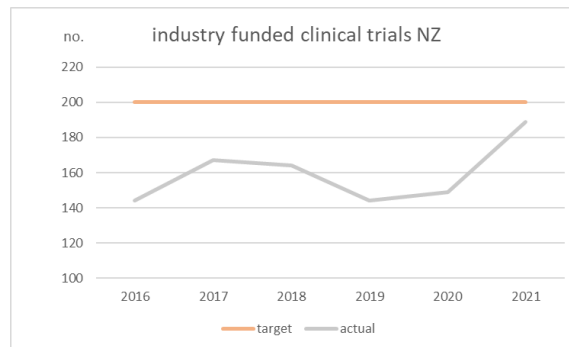
Government health research investment⁵



Australasian clinical trials NZ market share⁶



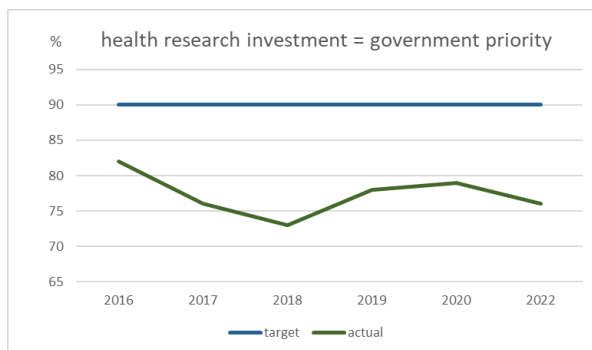
Industry funded clinical trials⁷



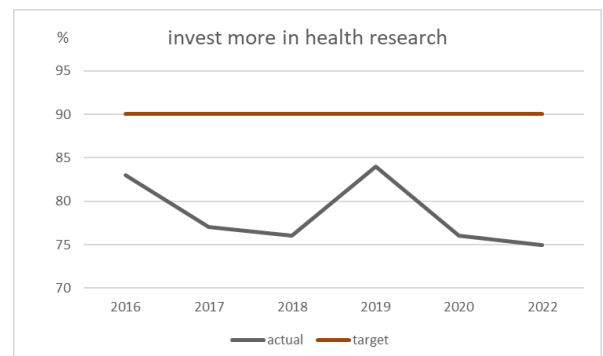
Strategy: Stakeholder and community support

Impact measures⁸

Health research a key government priority



More government investment in health research



⁵ NZ Treasury Budget estimates 2016 - 2020

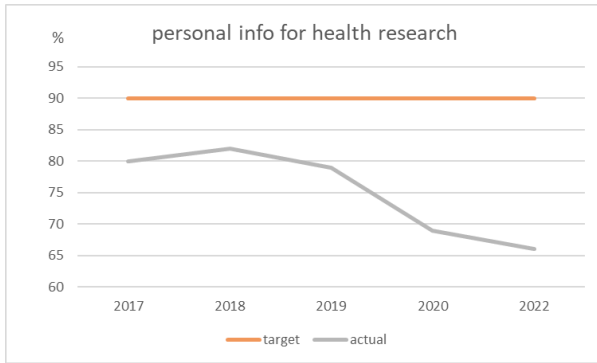
⁶ Commercially funded trials in NZ as percentage of Australia + NZ total. ANZCTR online database

⁷ HDEC database

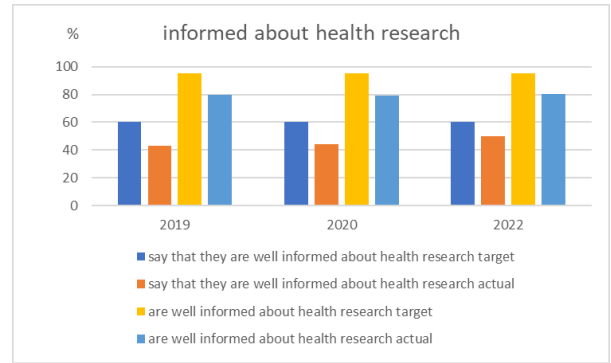
⁸ NZHR opinion polling

Impact measures⁸

Personal health information for health research



Being well informed about health research



Strategy: Build a sustainable and effective organisation

Impact measure

Membership derived revenue⁹



Partners and supporters

Platinum



Gold



Silver



Bronze



Foundation



Pro bono legal services

