



COVERSHEET

Minister	Hon Dr Shane Reti	Portfolio	Science, Innovation and Technology
Title of Cabinet paper	Transitioning health research funding from the Health Research Council to Research Funding New Zealand	Date to be published	9 April 2026

List of documents that have been proactively released		
Date	Title	Author
November 2025	Transitioning Health Research Funding from the Health Research Council to Research Funding New Zealand	Offices of the Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology, and of the Minister of Health
12 November 2025	Transitioning Health Research Funding from the Health Research Council to Research Funding New Zealand ECO-25-MIN-0185 Minute	Cabinet Office
5 November 2025	Future of Health Research Funding: Decision Making and Allocation RIS	MBIE and MOH
5 November 2025	RIS Annex 2 - Cost Recovery for a Fast-track Research Ethics Review Process	MBIE and MOH
3 December 2025	RIS Quality Assurance Feedback Form and QA Criteria	MBIE and MOH
14 August 2025 – 5 November 2025	Briefings on the Future of Health Research Funding	MBIE and MOH

Information redacted

YES

Any information redacted in this document is redacted in accordance with MBIE's policy on Proactive Release and is labelled with the reason for redaction. This may include information that would be redacted if this information was requested under Official Information Act 1982. Where this is the case, the reasons for withholding information are listed below. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified and that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

Some information has been withheld under the grounds of commercial information, confidential advice to Government, and confidential commercial information (trade secret).

BRIEFING

Transitioning health research funding to Research Funding New Zealand: Draft Cabinet paper

Date:	5 November 2025	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0023092 H2025074990

Action sought		
	Action sought	Deadline
Hon Simeon Brown Minister of Health	<p>Note the feedback received from consultation on the draft Cabinet paper.</p> <p>Agree to review proposed changes in the Cabinet paper and lodge for discussion at ECO on 12 November 2025.</p>	6 November 2025
Hon Dr Shane Reti Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology		

Contact for telephone discussion (if required)			
Name	Position	Telephone	1st contact
Landon McMillan	Policy Director, Science, Innovation and Technology, MBIE	Privacy of natural persons	✓
Lily Li	Principal Policy Advisor, Science System Policy, MBIE		
Ruth Isaac	Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Policy Group, Ministry of Health		✓

The following departments/agencies have been consulted
Treasury, Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Public Services Commission, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry for Primary Industries, Ministry for the Environment, Department of Conservation, Housing and Urban Development, National Emergency Management Agency, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry for Pacific Peoples, Ministry of Defence, Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Social Development, Inland Revenue, Ministry of Justice, Ministry for Regulations, Accident Compensation Corporation, Health New Zealand, Ministry for Ethnic Communities, Ministry for Women, Oranga Tamariki, Whaikaha and the Social Investment Agency.

Minister's office to complete:

Approved

Declined

Noted

Needs change

Seen

Overtaken by Events

See Minister's Notes

Withdrawn

Comments

BRIEFING

Transitioning health research funding to Research Funding New Zealand: Draft Cabinet paper

Date:	5 November 2025	Priority:	Urgent
Security classification:	In Confidence	Tracking number:	BRIEFING-REQ-0023092 H2025074990

Purpose

To provide an update on consultation feedback and the final draft of the health research funding Cabinet paper for lodging.

Recommended action

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) recommend that the **Minister of Health** and the **Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology**:

- a **Note** the feedback from stakeholder engagement on transitioning health research funding from the Health Research Council (HRC) to Research Funding New Zealand (RFNZ).

Noted

- b **Note** feedback from departmental consultation on the draft Cabinet paper and Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS).

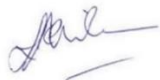
Noted

- c **Note** the regulatory impact analysis on the disestablishment of HRC and that this met the quality criteria for analysis of regulatory impacts by a joint MBIE and MOH panel.

Noted

- d **Agree** to lodge the Cabinet paper for discussion at ECO on 12 November 2025.

Agree/disagree



Landon McMillan
Policy Director, Science, Innovation and Technology,
MBIE

23 / 10 / 2025

Hon Dr Shane Reti
Minister of Science, Innovation and Technology

..... / /



Ruth Isaac
Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Policy Group,
Ministry of Health

5 / 11 / 2025


Hon Simeon Brown
Minister of Health

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Background

1. MBIE and MOH have jointly provided advice to Ministers on the approach to implementing Cabinet's in-principle decision to transition health research funding functions to RFNZ [BRIEFING-REQ-021265 and H2025073071 refer]. We have also provided a draft Cabinet paper seeking Cabinet's approval to disestablish the HRC and repeal the HRC Act 1990 to transition health research funding to RFNZ.
2. Ministers agreed for agency consultation on the paper to occur from 30 October to 5 November, and to consult Ministerial colleagues at the same time.
3. This paper provides a summary of consultation feedback and accompanies the Cabinet paper, which has been updated based on this feedback.

Confidential advice to Government



Summary of feedback from agency consultation

13. Feedback was largely positive, with most agencies confirming no substantive concerns and supporting the proposed transition.
14. Several agencies (e.g., MPI, Treasury, IRD) provided targeted comments:
 - a. MPI supported the transition and highlighted the importance of independent post-transition evaluation and improving timeliness of ethics reviews.
 - b. Treasury focused on fiscal clarity and recommended addressing financial transfers through a later joint Ministers' paper.
 - c. IRD emphasised ensuring the process remains tax neutral and offered to assist with legislative provisions if needed.
 - d. MSD noted potential future interest in contributing to research prioritisation.
 - e. PSC supported the paper from a policy perspective and noted that the proposal will reduce duplication. They suggested that additional detail on the transition process could be included in the Cabinet paper, including how the risks of change will be mitigated.
 - f. Health New Zealand expressed some concerns about the proposed disestablishment of the HRC, emphasising the value of independent health research expertise in funding decisions. They highlighted the HRC's critical role in supporting clinical, public health, and Māori and Pacific health research, and recommended retaining key functions such as ethics review, partnership grants, and clinical academic fellowships. Health New Zealand also stressed the importance of maintaining a focus on health outcomes and equity.
 - g. MoE noted they have an interest in workforce development functions and would like to participate in future policy work on this.
 - h. Other agencies (DPMC, ACC, TPK, DOC, NEMA) confirmed no material concerns but welcomed ongoing engagement if further policy detail emerges.
15. Overall, feedback was constructive, with strong support for the high-level approach and emphasis on careful implementation, governance clarity, and opportunities for future collaboration.

Changes to Cabinet paper based on feedback

16. The updated draft Cabinet paper is attached as Annex One. The only substantive change relates to fiscal transfer recommendations, following Treasury advice.
17. In reference to PSC's feedback, MBIE and MOH, with involvement from HRC, will commence detailed transition and risk mitigation planning from November 2025. We will share this plan with you in early 2026.
18. The concerns raised by Health New Zealand will be discussed directly with them through ongoing consultation, as they relate to matters that will be addressed in the new structure.
19. Cabinet has previously authorised the Minister of Finance and the Minister of SI&T to agree further reprioritisation decisions to implementation of the SI&T reforms [CAB-225-MIN-0126.08]. Under this authority, fiscal transfers can be addressed through a joint Ministers' paper (SI&T, Finance, and Health). Accordingly, the specific recommendation on ethics-related transfers has been removed

and replaced with a broader recommendation noting this authorisation and confirming that fiscal transfers will be managed via a joint ministerial process.

Regulatory Impact Analysis

20. The regulatory impact analysis for the HRC disestablishment is attached as Annex Two and focuses on the legislative and operational arrangements required to give effect to that in-principle agreement, particularly the transfer of functions from a Crown entity to departmental and non-departmental bodies.
21. A joint MBIE and MOH quality assurance panel has reviewed this regulatory impact statement and considered the statement to meet the quality assurance criteria.

Next Steps

22. Subject to your agreement to the proposed changes to the draft Cabinet paper, it will need to be lodged by 10am on 6 November to be considered at ECO on 12 November 2025.
23. Officials from MBIE and MOH will work together to develop drafting instructions for the PCO to include the HRC disestablishment provisions in the draft SI&T Bill.
24. Officials from MOH and MBIE will also provide further detailed advice on the Memorandum of Understanding between the Minister of Health and Minister of SI&T in early 2026, and on the detailed transition plan.

Annexes

Annex One: updated Draft Cabinet paper – Transitioning Health Research Funding from HRC to RFNZ.

Annex Two: Regulatory Impact Statement for Transitioning health research funding from HRC to RFNZ.