

Maori Party Policy: Research, Science and Technology

New Zealand Association of Scientists

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In essence, Maori Party policy is guided by our commitment to a set of nine kaupapa or values that arise from a Maori worldview, for the benefit of the entire nation. Consistency with these values underpins our policy position on a range of issues and portfolios. With regards to research, science and technology, four values are particularly instructive.

The first is the value of rangatiratanga: that tangata whenua be empowered as a full partner to Te Tiriti o Waitangi, including in relation to policies and decisions for public research. It is essential that Maori be critically involved in determining research priorities and directions in relation to the development and application of science and technology, and particularly so in relation to matauranga Maori.

Concerns that the research interests of Maori are given low priority and inadequate funding need to be addressed with some urgency. What is needed is a commitment from public research bodies to a Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based allocation model for determining both research priorities and funding. We also promote an increase in public research funds to accommodate the increase in Maori research that is anticipated from an invigorated Tiriti relationship. In academia, we are advocating for a redesign of the Performance Based Research Fund (PBRF) to better recognise the contribution of Maori academic researchers.

As a corollary of the commitment to rangatiratanga, research in particular geographical areas needs to happen in relationship with local hapū and iwi. This is the value of mana whenua; giving expression to the authority that local Maori have over their wellbeing, ancestral lands and resources, including their traditional knowledge and customary practices.

The third value is that of kaitiakitanga, that any research, development and application of matauranga Maori, science or technology uphold the integrity of the natural environment, and that these be developed specifically for aiding environmental care, protection, rejuvenation, and sustainability. For instance, the Maori Party highlights the urgent need for research into the development of sustainable, renewable energy sources such as wind, solar and wave; and research into improving the quality of the water in our rivers, lakes and waterways. Another critical area for research is sustainable land use.

For the Maori Party, the fourth value of particular relevance to research, science and technology is the protection of whakapapa; the importance of sustaining the network of ancestral links that give a Maori worldview meaning and vitality. Upholding this value does not, as has been widely misrepresented, translate into a Maori-led ban on all blue-sky research. It does, however, offer guidance in terms of clarity of purpose

and of heeding due caution. It also points to the necessity of dialogue with and consensus from tangata whenua and mana whenua.