

EMBARGOED – Wednesday 20 July 2011

## HRC funding announced for new Māori health research

The Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) has today announced a \$74.56 million funding investment into health research, including a new programme of Māori health research worth \$4.27M over five years. This programme is historic because it is the first HRC programme to be awarded to a non-University based host, the first to be awarded under a new HRC investment stream dedicated solely to Māori health research, and is only the second Māori-led programme to be awarded in the HRC's 20 year history.

"It is exciting to see such a range of Māori health research being funded. The collaborations within these research teams continue to build the capability and capacity which will contribute greatly to Māori health gains," says HRC Chief Executive, Dr Robin Olds.

**Dr Paul Reynolds** (*Whanganui, Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Tuwharetoa*), from the Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health: Te Atawhai o te Ao in Whanganui, has received funding for a new programme, which focuses on Māori intergenerational trauma and healing.

This programme of research will investigate the ways that people make recovery from sexual abuse, imprisonment and cultural disconnection. The research will be undertaken around the country with those who have experienced trauma, those who have recovered from trauma, and those who work to help with recovery from trauma. The aim of the research is to find pathways to recovery and identify good practice that will be useful for those affected by trauma and those who work with them. In keeping with the goals of the HRC's Rangahau Hauora Māori Research Investment Stream, the research will incorporate distinctive Māori health research processes, work in partnership with Māori communities, and contribute to building a highly skilled Māori health research workforce.

In addition to the new programme of research, three Māori health researchers have received funding for projects which will contribute to Māori health knowledge and health gains for Māori.

**Dr Amohia Boulton** (*Ngai te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui, Ngāti Pukenga*) from Te Maruo Ruahine Trust has received funding for a project worth \$1.0M over three years, to study the practice of traditional rongoā healing in contemporary health care settings. A Māori-centred research approach will be used to determine what types of service arrangements best support and maintain the cultural integrity of traditional Māori rongoā practice. Rongoā services support Māori wellbeing at two levels: providing holistic, culturally consistent assessment and treatment of individual symptoms/conditions, whilst maintaining and revitalising mātauranga, tikanga and te reo Māori.

Outcomes from the study will include a “map” of the rongoā service provision landscape, and a Service Development Model, to be used as a practical tool to support and inform practitioners who wish to improve rongoā service provision. The research, led by an all-Māori team, will extend current understandings of how rongoā practice does, and can, continue to deliver health benefits. It will also provide for the training of two community-based researchers.

**Dr Tristram Ingham** (*Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa*) from the University of Otago, Wellington, has received \$1.15M funding for a project which will investigate the contribution of housing conditions to Bronchiolitis disparities.

Bronchiolitis is a common, often serious lung infection of children which can have serious short and long-term consequences. Dr Ingham’s project will explore risk factors in the home environment, which potentially contribute to the striking and disproportionately high hospitalisation rate for bronchiolitis in Māori and Pacific children.

He will investigate independent effects of poor quality housing, and indoor climate (temperature/humidity) on the development of childhood respiratory infections, and bronchiolitis severity. This Māori-led, community partnership project is a complementary and important addition to his existing case-control study. It utilises a kaupapa-Māori methodology to investigate disparities in bronchiolitis severity for both Māori tamariki and Pacific Island children.

The research will: generate new knowledge of housing conditions for Māori and Pacific children; identify housing-related risk factors for avoidable hospitalisation; and inform policy to improve housing quality, to reduce the impact of respiratory disease for Māori and Pacific children.

**Dr Rhys Jones** (*Ngāti Kahungunu*) from The University of Auckland has received funding worth \$1.16M over three years for an innovative project, which will research health and wellbeing through urban marae in Tamaki Makaurau.

The establishment of food gardens on marae is an example of a health promotion intervention that can have wide-ranging benefits for physical, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing. However, little is known about whether these potential outcomes are achieved in practice.

Dr Jones' research will use qualitative methods to map the effects of marae food gardens on Māori health and wellbeing, based on experiences of marae communities in urban Tamaki Makaurau. The research aims to identify the most important health and wellbeing outcomes for participants; assess how well marae food gardens are helping to achieve these outcomes; and explore how particular aspects contribute to improving Māori health and wellbeing. The study will contribute valuable knowledge about the impacts of marae food gardens and about methods for assessing the effectiveness of other complex health promotion interventions.

**-Ends-**

### **2011 HRC annual funding round results**

The HRC processed 173 full applications for four different types of awards and will offer 52 contracts to the successful applicants. Project proposals were processed through a two-stage process beginning with 387 Expressions of Interest leading to 127 full applications assessed in the second stage. Successful applications were chosen by an assessment process involving national and international expert referees, detailed discussion by Science Assessing Committees, and further review by the Grant Approval Committee before final approval by the HRC Board. The total value of new research to be undertaken within universities, research institutes and District Health Boards is \$74.56 million (excluding GST). For detailed results, please visit the HRC website, [www.hrc.govt.nz](http://www.hrc.govt.nz)."

For more information about the research programmes and projects, please contact the researchers direct. Contact telephone numbers are below. The following list of successful applicants includes the named Principal Investigator only.

#### **HRC New Programmes:**

**Dr Paul Reynolds**, Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health: Te Atawhai o te Ao, Whanganui, phone (06) 344 1278  
*He Kokonga Whare: Māori Intergenerational Trauma and Healing*  
60 months, \$4,728,200

#### **HRC Projects:**

**Dr Amohia Boulton**, Te Maruo Ruahine Trust, Whanganui, phone (06) 347 6773  
*Supporting Traditional Rongoā Practice in Contemporary Health Care Settings*  
36 months, \$1,023,301

**Dr Tristram Ingham**, University of Otago, Wellington, phone (04) 385 5541 x 6842  
*Whiti Te Ra: The Contribution of Housing Conditions to Bronchiolitis Disparities*  
36 months, \$1,157,725

**Dr Rhys Jones**, The University of Auckland, phone (09) 923 6278  
*Marae Food Gardens: Health and Wellbeing through Urban Marae in Tamaki Makaurau*  
36 months, \$1,165,597

For information about how the HRC functions, please contact Dr Robin Olds, HRC Chief Executive, telephone: (09) 303 5204, mobile: 021 966 324, or email: [rolds@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:rolds@hrc.govt.nz); or Kristine Scherp, HRC Manager, Communications, telephone: (09) 303 5202 or email: [kscherp@hrc.govt.nz](mailto:kscherp@hrc.govt.nz).

### **About the Health Research Council of New Zealand**

The HRC is the principal Crown agency responsible for the management of the Government's investment in public good health research in New Zealand. Our mission is 'benefiting New Zealand through health research', with a vision of improved health and quality of life for all. To find out more about the HRC go to <http://www.hrc.govt.nz/about-us>.