



Nationally Significant Mahi Results In Funding Win

WHANGANUI, 10 May 2022: Ngāti Hauiti-owned Whakauae Research Services has been named as a recipient of major funding from the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) in recognition of the pioneering work they have undertaken to support health equity for Māori.

Whakauae Research holds a unique position as the only research centre in Aotearoa that is directly owned and accountable to an Iwi entity.

The Rangitikei based research service is one of four organisations to receive a share of the HRC's \$38.3 million Independent Research Organisation Capability Fund which recognises nationally significant work conducted by organisations outside of the mainstream government and university sector.

Whakauae Research Centre Director Amohia Boulton says the funds are specifically awarded to build research and innovation capability.

“We’re extremely thankful for this funding boost. It gives us the opportunity to further develop our workforce, grow research capacity, ensure that important findings are shared with key decision-makers and ultimately, to make a powerful contribution to improving health outcomes for Māori throughout Aotearoa.

“The pandemic has been a wakeup call for the health system. Making fundamental changes to the way the system does - or doesn’t - work for Māori is the most important work we can undertake over the next few years for the benefit of all New Zealanders,” she says.

As Aotearoa undergoes a major health restructure, including the pending launch of the Māori Health Authority (MHA) in July, the funding comes at an important time for an organisation working to gather critical evidence about how Māori experience the health system.

“We aim to release findings that provide the hard evidence needed to inform policy and strategy in the health sector. We want to unlock the potential of tangata whenua to exercise

their mana and enable their mauri to flourish and we want to do it the right way, based on the right data, to ensure this systematic change is a long-term success,” says Boulton

The only research centre in Aotearoa that is directly accountable to an Iwi entity, Whakauae Research were established by Ngāti Hauiti in 2005 and have developed a unique Kaupapa Māori research model which blends traditional Western knowledge and mātauranga Māori.

The announcement of the funding caps a significant year for Whakauae Research which received an HRC programme grant in July 2021, while Boulton was presented with the prestigious Royal Society Te Tohu Rangahau Award; a medal awarded by the HRC for outstanding Māori health leadership, excellence and contribution and the awarding in October.

In addition to Whakauae Research, the fund’s recipients are, Te Atawhai o te Ao, Malaghan Institute of Medical Research and the Medical Research Institute of New Zealand.

“We send our congratulations to all the recipients of the Independent Research Organisation Capability Fund,” says Boulton.

She is particularly pleased to note that two of the four organisations awarded funding are Māori research centres dedicated to Kaupapa Māori research and both are based in the same rohe.

“Our congratulations to Te Atawhai o te Ao on receiving this funding. Such significant funding signals a clear commitment to health equity and gives us all encouragement to keep building evidence to support transformational change.”

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