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PRESS RELEASE

Cuts to Humanities and Social Sciences Research Will Impact Māori Most

The Pou Matarua Co-directors of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga, Aotearoa's only Māori Centre of Research Excellence (NPM) strongly condemn the Government's decision to defund social science and humanities research within the Marsden Fund. They say Māori researchers, communities, and knowledge systems stand to suffer the most.

"Social science and humanities research is crucial to understanding the cultural and wider contexts and systems that we all live in. It forms the basis for understanding the drivers behind why people thrive socially and economically," says Professor Waimarie Nikora.

"It is short-sighted and reckless to cut crucial funding in these areas and it will be detrimental to long term economic and social well-being. Research on Māori health, education, and social wellbeing reduces systemic barriers and equips more New Zealanders to contribute effectively to the economy," she says.

"Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga has been a world leader in developing approaches that work across all disciplines to solve problems and with mātauranga Māori at the heart of what we do."

The funding cuts will also have an outsized impact on the Māori community.

"We know that Māori researchers, communities, and knowledge systems stand to suffer the most from this decision," says Pou Matarua Professor Tahu Kukutai. "In 2024, Māori made up 13% of all [Marsden funded investigators](#). Take away the humanities and social sciences panel, and that plunges to just 5.5%. This decision defunds Māori research and Māori researchers by stealth."

Professor Kukutai says it makes no sense to disinvest in the next generation of Māori scholars when the government has repeatedly recognised the urgent need to grow the Māori research workforce. "Humanities and social sciences are foundational to advancing and nurturing the next generation of Māori scholars. Without this funding avenue, the future for them looks pretty grim."

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