



# Cancer Trials New Zealand

## Strategic Plan 2021-26



## Background

Cancer Trials New Zealand (CTNZ) was established in January 2003 and aims to foster and conduct research that improves outcomes and reduces inequity for people with cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand. CTNZ partners with researchers and Cancer Centres throughout New Zealand to develop clinical questions into externally funded clinical research studies and provides the expertise necessary to conduct these to best international practice standards.

Funding from the Cancer Society Auckland and Northland (CSAN) was critical to the initial development of CTNZ. CSAN has continued to provide core support that is essential for CTNZ functioning, including management, systems development, and consumer engagement, as well as the activities necessary for developing successful research funding applications. Our individual studies are generally funded through highly competitive grant mechanisms (for example applications to funding rounds from government, research organisations or charities). The competitive funding environment however leaves many high quality studies shelved.

The burden of cancer is borne inequitably, particularly by Māori and Pacific peoples. Our strategic direction recognises the importance of Te Titiri o Waitangi and the need for a more co-ordinated and concerted effort to reduce inequity in outcomes for those affected by cancer.

[www.cancertrialsnz.ac.nz](http://www.cancertrialsnz.ac.nz)

## Senior Management Group

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## Our Vision

Equitable and improved outcomes for those affected by cancer, emphasizing partnership with Māori and excellence in clinical research

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## Our Mission

To sustain and grow a collaborative clinical research programme which is responsive to the principles of equity and the priorities of those affected by cancer in Aotearoa New Zealand

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## Our Core Values

- Equity
- Collaboration and partnership
- Integrity
- Best practice
- Innovation
- Responsiveness

## Our Philosophy and Values

CTNZ is committed to the principle of a learning health care system, where research is embedded in the delivery of health care, as the mechanism for improving cancer outcomes in New Zealand. We believe collaboration and partnership will build strength in research and foster both patient-driven research and implementation of research outcomes into better health care. In particular, we need to improve outcomes for Māori, Pacific peoples and those living in poverty or rural isolation who currently have worse cancer outcomes. Through the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi we are committed to partnership with Māori, to supporting research led by Māori and to work towards equity for Māori in cancer outcomes.



## Strategic Alignment

The CTNZ Strategic Plan aligns with Government Strategic plans for Health and Cancer. Our philosophy of collaboration and partnership to improve cancer outcomes is reflected in the strategic plans of several NGOs. Key relevant policies for current organisations are outlined on the following pages. The creation of Health NZ and the Māori Health Authority will provide additional opportunities for ensuring strategic alignment in the future.



Organisation	Relevant strategic priorities
<b>Ministry of Health – New Zealand Health Research Strategy 2017-2027</b>  <i>Mission: By 2027, New Zealand will have a world leading health research and innovation system that, through excellent research, improves the health and wellbeing of all New Zealanders</i>	<p>Invest in excellent health research that addresses the health needs of all New Zealanders</p> <p>Create a vibrant research environment in the health sector</p> <p>Build and strengthen pathways for translating research findings into policy and practice</p> <p>Advance innovative ideas and commercial opportunities</p>
<b>Ministry of Health - Te Mahere mō te Mate Pukupuku o Aotearoa, New Zealand Cancer Action Plan 2019-2029</b>  <i>Delivering on cancer prevention and care – ‘every person, every time’</i>	<p>Te huanga 1: He pūnaha atawhai</p> <p>Outcome 1: New Zealanders have a system that delivers consistent and modern cancer care</p> <p>Te huanga 2: He taurite ngā huanga</p> <p>Outcome 2: New Zealanders experience equitable cancer outcomes</p> <p>Te huanga 3: He iti iho te mate pukupuku</p> <p>Outcome 3: New Zealanders have fewer cancers</p> <p>Te huanga 4: He hiki ake i te oranga</p> <p>Outcome 4: New Zealanders have better cancer survival, supportive care and end-of-life care</p>
<b>Te Aho o Te Kahu, The Cancer Control Agency</b>  <i>We constantly seek new knowledge, insights and applications for best practice to lead fundamental change in the prevention and treatment of cancer in New Zealand.</i>  <i>Mā te tini, mā te mano ka rapa te whai</i> <i>With unity, many hands make light of the work</i>	<p>The purpose of the Agency is to provide strong central leadership and oversight of cancer control. It is equity-led, knowledge-driven, person and whānau-centred and outcomes-focused, taking a whole-of-system approach to preventing and managing cancer</p> <p>Specifically for CTNZ:</p> <p>Ensure effective diagnosis and treatment to reduce cancer morbidity and mortality</p> <p>Improve the quality of life for those with cancer, their family and whānau through support, rehabilitation and palliative care</p> <p>Improve the delivery of services across the continuum of cancer control through effective planning, co-ordination and integration of resources and activity, monitoring and evaluation</p> <p>Improve the effectiveness of cancer control in New Zealand through research and surveillance</p>
<b>Hei Āhuru Mōwai</b>  <i>Mission: to provide a safe space for Māori cancer specialists to come together, wānanga and collectively address Māori cancer inequities</i>	<p>Focuses on system level advocacy, collaborating with Māori kaimahi across the continuum and contributing to research agendas that reduce Māori cancer inequities</p>



<b>Health Research Council of New Zealand</b>	Investing in research excellence, partnering for impact, strengthening the workforce, setting national research priorities
<i>Support high-quality, high-impact research that improves the lives of all New Zealanders</i>	
<b>Cancer Society New Zealand, Te Kāhui Matepukupuku o Aotearoa</b>	<p>Develop a robust, nationwide information base that presents evidence from research findings and sector trends in a way that is accessible and usable for a variety of stakeholders</p> <p>Strengthen existing relationships with key public health sector entities, including the Ministry of Health, District Health Boards (DHBs), Health Research Council, Universities and Primary Health Organisations</p>
<b>Cancer Research Trust New Zealand</b>	<p>Promote research into the prevention and control of all forms of cancer in New Zealand</p> <p>Promote education and the advancement of best practice among those working in cancer in New Zealand</p>
<b>Breast Cancer Foundation New Zealand</b>	<p>Funds the latest technologies and equipment for hospitals, ensuring Kiwis have access to new treatments as early as possible, and training doctors and nurses to use them</p> <p>Support of clinical trials and lobbying for wider access to trials of new drugs</p> <p>Lobbying the government to introduce powerful new drugs faster.</p> <p>Funds world-class Kiwi researchers to develop new treatments</p>
<b>Leukaemia and Blood Cancer New Zealand</b>	<p>With a vision to cure and a mission to care</p> <p>Committed to improving the quality of life for patients and their families living with leukaemia, lymphoma, myeloma, and related blood conditions</p>
<b>Gut Cancer Foundation</b>	<p>Motivated to give New Zealanders with gut cancers access to new treatments sooner and support researchers to discover better ways to detect, diagnose and treat gut cancers</p> <p>Ensure the causes and symptoms of gut cancers are better understood</p> <p>Support the brightest minds to accelerate the research, contribute to global advancements, educate and increase awareness, to make a profound and positive impact on the lives of those impacted by or at risk of gut cancers</p>
<b>Breast Cancer Trials</b>	<p>World-leading breast cancer doctors and researchers based in Australia and New Zealand with a commitment to exploring and finding better treatments for people affected by breast cancer through clinical trials research</p>
<i>Our mission: to conduct the highest quality clinical trials research that improves outcomes for people affected by breast cancer</i>	

## Challenges

In developing the CTNZ Strategic Plan we considered a broad range of challenges to our vision of equitable improvement in cancer outcomes through partnership and clinical cancer research.

Theme	Our challenges	Response to challenge	Strategic goal
<b>Inequity</b>	<p>Inequity in health outcomes, particularly for Māori and Pacific peoples and those in rural areas</p> <p>Under-representation of researchers who are Māori</p> <p>Paucity of cancer research led by Māori</p> <p>Limited number of projects proposed which focus on cancer outcomes for Māori</p> <p>Inequity of access to clinical trials</p> <p>Ensuring that new advances in cancer care, including technological advances, do not increase inequity</p>	<p>Form equitably resourced partnerships with Māori research groups and consumers</p> <p>Actively seek opportunities to support career development for Māori researchers</p> <p>Engage with consumers and health care providers in rural areas</p> <p>Actively prioritise research that addresses inequities</p> <p>Ensure consideration of equity is foremost in choice of projects and designs</p> <p>Develop expertise in methods for trials which enhance accessibility for people in groups currently under-represented in trials</p> <p>Analyse enrolment of Māori and Pacific participants into CTNZ studies</p>	1, 2, 3, 4
<b>Complexity</b>	<p>Precision medicine drives much of the current research in cancer treatment leading to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increased complexity and size of cancer trials (multiple treatments, multiple arms)</li> <li>increased need for collaboration with scientists</li> <li>increased need for multi-site research collaborations</li> <li>innovation in trial design</li> <li>embedding of research in clinical care</li> </ul>	<p>Foster partnerships with researchers through the continuum from basic science to implementation</p> <p>Develop and foster partnerships with cancer research groups both in New Zealand and overseas</p> <p>Seek funding for partnerships to develop infrastructure for innovative trial methods and processes (e.g. statistical methods, biobanks, genomics)</p> <p>Deliver education in innovative trial design</p> <p>Contribute to development and implementation of a learning health care system which works effectively for excellent cancer care</p>	3, 4, 5

<b>Cost of cancer treatment</b>	Escalating costs of cancer treatment impact on research questions and cost	Foster relationship with PHARMAC to maximise the relevance of research to Aotearoa New Zealand patients	5
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>Lack of medium to long term infrastructure support for trial development and conduct</p> <p>Lack of medium to long term research support at cancer sites</p> <p>Challenges to workforce stability and career progression</p>	<p>Collaborate on national approaches to infrastructure support (HRC/MOH project 'Enhancing New Zealand's Clinical Trials')</p> <p>Develop and employ cost-effective methods for running clinical trials</p> <p>Contribute to development and implementation of a learning health care system with cancer research embedded in clinical care</p>	4, 5
<b>Research funding</b>	<p>Low levels of research funding in New Zealand</p> <p>Multiple funding sources often needed to conduct a single clinical trial</p>	<p>Contribute to the development of a cost-effective infrastructure which will support accessible high quality clinical trials within the health care systems</p> <p>Ensure research programme is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• patient- and whānau-oriented, equity-focused and Te Tiriti-compliant</li> <li>• aligned with strategic goals of health system and funding organisations</li> </ul>	3, 4, 5
<b>Collaboration</b>	<p>Multiple partners are required for a successful programme of cancer clinical research</p> <p>Current collaborative links are limited</p>	<p>Develop and foster relationships with relevant organisations including government and health care delivery groups, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)</p> <p>Foster partnerships with researchers through the continuum from basic science to implementation</p> <p>Develop and foster partnerships with cancer research groups both in New Zealand and overseas</p> <p>Collaborate on national approaches into developing a learning health care system</p>	1, 2, 5
<b>Implementation /translation</b>	<p>Engagement with cancer care and other health care providers</p> <p>Integrating research into cancer health care and policy</p>	Foster partnerships with all cancer treatment centres and other health providers to enhance opportunities for implementation and health delivery research	3, 4, 5



<b>Health care reform</b>	Transformational changes in the New Zealand Health System. Working with health reform processes to ensure cancer research is embedded in clinical care	Engage in discussions or make submissions on the transformation to Health NZ and the Māori Health Authority regarding the importance of embedding clinical research in the health system to achieve equitable, optimal cancer outcomes for all  Ensure cancer clinical research perspectives are communicated to the HRC/MOH project 'Enhancing New Zealand's Clinical Trials'	5
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## Strategic Goals

These goals provide a framework to guide activities for the next 5 years.

<b>GOAL 1:</b>  Partnership with Māori	Further develop partnerships with Māori organisations, researchers and consumers to ensure that research is informed by Kaupapa Māori and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and that CTNZ research addresses inequities in outcomes for Māori affected by cancer
<b>GOAL 2:</b>  Equity and consumer engagement	Develop relationships with Pacific peoples, rural health care providers, primary care researchers and consumers to identify opportunities for partnership in research which addresses the needs of consumers and reduces inequity for these groups
<b>GOAL 3</b>  Research portfolio development	Create opportunities for identifying and developing clinical research which aligns with the CTNZ strategic plan
<b>GOAL 4:</b>  Innovation and excellence in research	Foster a culture of research excellence and build capacity for innovation in research design and conduct
<b>GOAL 5:</b>  Collaboration for strategic alignment	Optimise the potential for and impact of CTNZ research through partnership and strategic alignment in Aotearoa New Zealand and overseas

## GOAL 1: Partnership with Māori

### Objective 1.1

Develop partnerships with Māori researchers and consumers to ensure that research is informed by Kaupapa Māori and the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and identify collaborative research opportunities and priorities

#### Actions

- Engage with Hei Āhuru Mōwai to explore a partnership framework to identify ways of working together
- Develop (in partnership) a process for documenting current Māori clinical cancer research priorities, as determined by Māori Health Groups, where CTNZ could add value
- Look for funding opportunities to support development and fostering of partnerships

#### Progress measures

- Submitted funding application (in partnership with Hei Āhuru Mōwai) for a Māori project manager to develop a partnership framework
- A process for documenting current Māori clinical cancer research priorities, as determined by Māori Health Groups

### Objective 1.2

Strengthen opportunities for partnership with Māori resulting from existing research collaborations

#### Actions

- Progress the preliminary discussions around CTNZ's role in Rakeiora study
- Explore opportunities from Māori women's wellness breast cancer substudy and development of gynaecological cancer equivalent
- Explore opportunities for community engagement with Māori whānau and Māori researchers for the development of infrastructure for teletrial methodology

#### Progress measures

- Formalised role for CTNZ in Rakeiora study
- Submitted grant applications to develop Māori Women's Wellness programmes for women with breast cancer and women with gynaecological cancer
- Submitted grant application to support the engagement with Māori communities in the development of teletrial methodology

### Objective 1.3

Research that addresses inequities in outcomes for Māori affected by cancer

#### Actions

- Collaborate with Māori on research to directly address the needs of Māori affected by cancer
- Seek opportunities for CTNZ to contribute to Māori-led research

#### Progress measures

- Submitted funding application for at least one clinical cancer project co-designed and co-led with Māori investigators
- All CTNZ research projects designed to have equitable knowledge gains for Māori with cancer

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate discussions with Māori regarding co-design at an early stage of project development</li> <li>• Ensure the CTNZ research portfolio is structured to reduce inequity</li> </ul>	
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<b>Objective 1.4</b> Contribute to the development of Māori-led research	
<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek opportunities for CTNZ to contribute to Māori-led research</li> <li>• Contribute to Māori workforce development by providing co-supervision of emerging Māori researchers</li> </ul>	<b>Progress measures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Māori early career researchers included as investigators and research staff in projects</li> <li>• Submitted project grant funding application for a Māori-led Mātauranga Māori research project</li> </ul>

## GOAL 2: Equity and consumer engagement

### Objective 2.1

Expand our network of consumers to identify opportunities for collaborative research which addresses their needs

#### Actions

- Establish forums and process for engagement with consumers to set research priorities
- Identify and develop wider network of consumers

#### Progress measures

- A consumer-led process for ongoing documentation of research priorities
- A process for ongoing identification and documentation of the network of consumers
- Terms of reference for a consumer network

### Objective 2.2

Explore partnership to address inequity in cancer outcomes for Pacific peoples through research

#### Actions

- Identify Pacific researchers working in cancer clinical trials
- Develop an advisory group for building relationships with Pacific communities and cancer researchers
- Meet with Pacific researchers to explore opportunities for collaboration
- Summarise data on participation of Pacific peoples in CTNZ cancer research to date

#### Progress measures

- A list of Pacific researchers working in cancer clinical trials
- Appointment of a Pacific advisory group with terms of reference
- A process for ongoing relationship building with Pacific researchers
- An analysis of numbers of Pacific participants in CTNZ research projects

### Objective 2.3

Explore partnerships to address inequity of access to trials by geographic location through research

#### Actions

- Identify geographical gaps in distribution and activity of clinical trial sites that are creating inequity of access
- Determine the feasibility of setting up additional research sites or providing teletrial infrastructure
- Develop infrastructure and methods for running teletrials

#### Progress measures

- An analysis of patient recruitment in CTNZ studies across Aotearoa New Zealand
- A list of potential new clinical trial sites
- Submitted grant funding application for evaluation of the implementation of a teletrial
- A report on national infrastructure needs for implementation of teletrials across New Zealand
- Identified or developed studies suitable for teletrial implementation



### GOAL 3: Research portfolio development

#### Objective 3.1

Identify investigator-led concepts

##### Actions

- Actively link with our collaborators for specific funding calls
- Hold workshops for idea generation

##### Progress measures

- 1-2 funding applications submitted per year
- One idea generation workshop completed by the end of 2022
- A report on the engagement and feedback of this process with Māori, Pacific peoples and consumers

#### Objective 3.2

Actively seek trial/study concepts to address inequity

##### Actions

- Build on partnerships and collaborations developed under objectives of Goals 1 and 2 to identify research ideas addressing inequity
- Run focused workshops based on funding calls and areas of engagement and need

##### Progress measures

- A research funding application developed and submitted
- One idea generation workshop with Māori researchers completed by the end of 2022

#### Objective 3.3

Facilitating research activity wider scope by forming collaborations with researchers in other relevant disciplines (surgery, radiation, population health, service delivery, primary care, prevention, equity, rehabilitation and supportive care)

##### Actions

- Write to cancer health professionals and academics in fields outside of medical oncology (currently dominates research activity) to build awareness
- Hold a CTNZ Annual Scientific Meeting (ASM) with a focus on broader collaboration

##### Progress measures

- A register of interested collaborators, health disciplines and potential research topics by end of 2023
- Increased representation from areas outside medical oncology in speakers and attendees at CTNZ ASMs by end of 2023

<b>Objective 3.4</b> Use data to inform research portfolio	
<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Carry out research to inform policy in relation to timely and equitable access to cancer care across the continuum</li><li>• Explore opportunities to consolidate clinical data from DHB sites to determine areas of inequity</li></ul>	<b>Progress measures</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Submitted funding application by end of 2024</li></ul>

## GOAL 4: Innovations and excellence in research

### Objective 4.1

Leadership and infrastructure for investigator-initiated cancer clinical research in New Zealand

#### Actions

- Engage in the HRC/MOH project 'Enhancing New Zealand's Clinical Trials'
- Provide access to and expertise in cost-effective systems required for Good Clinical Research Practice including clinical data security, confidentiality, integrity, availability, Māori data sovereignty, and database systems and mobile technologies
- Develop a national cancer clinical trials management system as a central repository of site trial information
- Explore opportunities to partner in international platform trials to address research questions relevant to Aotearoa New Zealand
- Contribute to the development of clinical registries alongside biobanks

#### Progress measures

- Completed CTNZ submission on the development of options for the HRC/MOH project 'Enhancing New Zealand's Clinical Trials' process by end of 2022
- Sustainable income streams for ongoing support of core infrastructure for CTNZ by 2026
- Standard Operating Procedures to support emerging policies in data security, sovereignty and curation
- Report on types of platform trials with a stock take of potential international studies underway by end of 2023
- Completed survey of DHB cancer researchers and DHB cancer trial sites to understand needs and capabilities across New Zealand by end of 2022
- Grants submitted to fund development of bespoke databases for clinical registries linked to biobanks by end of 2023

### Objective 4.2

Education of current and future clinical trials workforce

#### Actions

- Continue to offer workshops on critical appraisal and concept development to clinical researchers
- Develop funding stream for clinical research fellows
- Conference presentations and publications
- CTNZ ASM: education on research methodology
- CTNZ ASM: education about inequity of cancer care and outcomes
- Education and capability development
- Training of cancer site workforce on CTNZ Standard Operating Procedures

#### Progress measures

- Number of emerging researchers attending workshops and participant feedback surveys
- Proportion of concept development workshop participants being accepted for ACORD workshop every 2 years
- Appointment of clinical research fellow by 2023
- CTNZ ASM attendance and participant feedback survey
- Number of Principal Investigators (PIs) submitting clinical cancer research grants (5 – 10 year horizon)
- Number of PIs submitting successful clinical cancer research grants (5 – 10 year horizon)
- Training sessions held for sites

## GOAL 5: Collaboration for strategic alignment

### Objective 5.1

Optimise the potential for and impact of our research through partnership and strategic alignment in Aotearoa New Zealand

#### Actions

In addition to actions listed under Goals 1 and 2, addressing inequity partnerships:

- Foster relationships with Government organisations including Te Aho o Te Kahu, PHARMAC, the DHBs, Health NZ and the Māori Health Authority
- Foster relationships with the Cancer Society New Zealand and other non-governmental cancer organisations
- Engage with DHBs' Cancer Centre Research Units and explore mutually beneficial partnerships
- Foster relationships with tumour Special Interest Groups, New Zealand Society for Oncology, New Zealand Association of Clinical Research, university based cancer research groups, research centres and institutes

#### Progress measures

- Effective relationships with Government and NGOs including discussions regarding priority setting for research
- Meeting with other cancer research groups
- Joint activity with one or more other clinical and/or research groups (including research, workshops, meetings)
- Submitted funding applications

### Objective 5.2

Build opportunities for international research collaboration

#### Actions

- Explore opportunities to foster alliances with cancer trials groups in other countries

#### Progress measures

- Identify two key international partners and discuss strategic collaboration by end of 2024

## Acknowledgement and thanks

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<b>Chris Jackson</b>	Medical Oncologist, Medical Director of Cancer Society of New Zealand (Dunedin)
<b>Michael Jameson</b>	Medical Oncologist (Hamilton)
<b>Ben Lawrence</b>	Medical Oncologist, Head of Department of Oncology, University of Auckland (Auckland)
<b>Ngāpei Ngatai</b>	CTNZ Kaimanāki Oranga (Consumer Advisor) (New Plymouth)
<b>Cris Print</b>	Professor in Department of Molecular Medicine & Pathology, Expertise in genomics, bioinformatics and tissue banking (Auckland)
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<b>Rob Weinkove</b>	Haematologist, Clinical Director at the Malaghan Institute of Medical Research (Wellington)
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