***MAORI RESEARCH and EVALUATION:***

***Research questions for University of Otago***

# Context

Water Safety New Zealand (WSNZ) NZ is currently refreshing its Māori strategy and seeking to improve its capability to work with Māori. It has developed a project plan for the strategy refresh that contains five different workstreams, including one focused on data, research and evaluation. This workstream looks at some key Māori knowledge management issues for the water safety sector and included the following milestones:

* Advice to the CSRG Data and Research Working Group on Māori drowning prevention research priorities; and
* Advice to WSNZ CE on what best practice looks like for Māori water safety programmes, including the identification of assessment criteria for use in evaluative activity.

WSNZ is looking for specialist Māori advice from the University of Otago to inform the development of these milestones.

Outlined below for each of the issue areas covered by these milestones are:

* why the issue is considered important;
* the key research questions WSNZ would like advice on
* potential research directions.

This material should guide the development of the advice from the University of Otago.

***Māori drowning research priorities***

The water safety sector has a wide range of legitimate research needs, but with limited funding available to the sector for research not all of these research needs are achievable in the short-term. Moreover, it is considered that the sector needs to be able to better utilise the research that is available and ensure that the research contributes to helping realise sector goals and objectives. For this reason, the research focus of the water safety sector is seen to be best focused on applied research.

Prioritisation criteria can help inform decision making on which specific research programmes to fund and to help focus researchers into areas of highest need. It is considered that by setting specific knowledge themes a more coordinated and consistent approach to improving the sector’s knowledge needs can be affected. WSNZ along with expert advisors from the wider water safety sector have agreed a set of knowledge themes within which sector research priorities can sit. (These are attached as Appendix B.)

An attempt was also made to identify some research priorities, but these were not definitive. In the 2018/19 WSNZ Funding Round prospectus it was indicated that those applying for research during that WSNZ was “particularly interested in research that can contribute to the design of interventions that will result in meaningful change to a person’s behaviour that will lower their drowning risk. See *Knowledge theme 2: People and Prevention.*”

***Research questions***

1. Review existing Water safety sector knowledge themes to:
2. Identify knowledge themes of ‘specific relevance’ to Māori drowning
   * Comment on how these themes could be amended to better reflect/meet Māori drowning prevention knowledge needs.
3. Within these knowledge themes identify potential research priorities for Māori drowning, including:
   * Why these Māori drowning prevention research priorities should be given focus; and
   * What sort/type of research projects could be pursued under the priorities (ie indicative research programmes).
4. How can Phillips’ PhD findings from 2019 inform the development of Kia Maanu, Kia Ora research priorities that:
5. express water safety from Māori perspectives to underpin the Kia Maanu, Kia Ora Strategy;
6. develop findings into usable policies and documents for Kia Maanu, Kia Ora Māori Water Safety Advisory Group and Māori communities; and
7. develop findings into usable policies to support WSNZ’s aspirations to co-lead and co-develop sector change in realisation of zero drowning for Māori communities.

***Research directions***

This advice could be informed by:

* How other organisations/agencies have included Māori research priorities in their research funding frameworks (eg NZ Fire Service, Health Research Council).
* What the difference is between research on Māori and Kaupapa Māori research.
* Other ways to express the Māori drowning prevention research priorities within the existing framework

***Best practice for Māori water safety programmes***

Programme evaluation is the process by which judgements are made about the merit or worth of one or more programmes, most often in relation to their effectiveness, efficiency or appropriateness. Evaluation is an essential practice in public health, but it is not practiced consistently in the water safety sector, nor is it well-integrated into the day-to-day management of drowning prevention programmes.

It is important that Māori water safety/drowning prevention programmes can be measured and evaluated, and the results able to be shared with other researchers, funders and providers in a consistent and comparable way. To be able to do this effectively WSNZ needs better knowledge about what best practice is for Māori drowning prevention initiatives and how it best can be assessed.

***Research questions***

1. What is best practice for water safety programmes delivered to Māori via:
2. *Mainstream delivery* – ie ‘One size fits all’ programmes where no or little attempt is made to tailor delivery specifically to Māori.
3. *Modified mainstream delivery* – ie Where mainstream programmes have been adapted to include te reo or tīkanga Māori elements in order to appeal to Māori audiences.
4. *Kaupapa Māori delivery* – ie Where programme delivery is consistent with kaupapa Māori principles and a Māori way of being.
5. What are the assessment criteria to be used in evaluative activity for (a) to (c) above and how best to apply the assessment process/framework. This includes consideration of the:

* Information needs
* Resource requirements
* Capability of evaluators
* Relationships/engagement with participants

1. How can the Wai Puna Model of Water Safety be developed as an evaluative tool to guide the assessment of research priorities and water safety programmes (see Te Ara Tika, Health Research Council).

***Research directions***

This advice could be informed by:

* What other current monitoring/evaluation processes exist for Māori programmes and how they could be adapted (eg the JR McKenzie Trust approach, Whanau Ora).
* How existing research into Māori provider success could apply to Māori water safety practitioners.
* Kaupapa Māori pedagogies associated with water safety.