

## ARVO International Advocacy Toolkit: New Zealand

1. Which organization/s are significant sources of research funding? (e.g., national/local governments; private funding/foundations/charity groups; large non-governmental organizations (NGOs); industry/pharmaceutical companies)

### **National**

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

- Government funded agency that invests in health-related research leading to the better health and wellbeing of New Zealanders
- Supports projects with translational potential and commercial opportunities that bring tangible and direct benefits to New Zealanders.
- Support emerging researchers through post-doctoral fellowships which pay salaries (e.g. Sir Charles Hercus Health Research Fellowship)
- Invests around \$120M a year in NZ health research and researchers.

<https://www.hrc.govt.nz>

#### **Marsden Fund-Royal Society of New Zealand**

- Government funded agency that invests in projects that explore new ideas that may not be funded through other funding streams
- Fosters creativity and innovation within the research, science and technology system.
- Support emerging researchers through grants but this does not cover salaries (eg Fast Start Grant)
- Invests around \$80M a year in research and researchers.

<https://www.royalsociety.org.nz>

### **Private funding/Foundations/Charity groups:**

#### **Auckland Medical Research Foundation**

- Largest independent funder of medical research in New Zealand
- Funding support extends across the entire spectrum of medical and health science research
- Offers a range of a fellowships, travel grants and doctoral scholarships

<https://www.medicalresearch.org.nz>

### **The New Zealand Optometric Vision Research Foundation**

- Funded by contributions from optometrists, ophthalmologists, dispensing opticians, optical wholesale companies and donations by businesses and individuals.
- Provide funds for local research and vision care projects and support projects that foster research in Optometry and Vision Science at the School of Optometry, the University of Auckland

<https://www.nzovrf.org.nz>

### **Save Sight Society**

- Formed by a group of NZ Ophthalmologists
- Provides research funds and grants to ophthalmologists, trainee ophthalmologists or work being done in University Departments of Ophthalmology

<https://www.savesightsociety.org.nz>

## **2. What does the normal science funding/policy decision-making process look like?**

The funding for major research projects comes from the Health Research Council of New Zealand (HRC) and the Marsden Fund. Funding is extremely competitive and is based on the scientific quality of the project, its feasibility and track record of the team. Researchers also need to demonstrate how their research has the potential to address Māori health needs and priorities as a means of reducing health disparities between Māori and Pacific peoples in New Zealand. Applications are made by submission of an expression of an interest and following shortlisting of applications, an invitation to write a full proposal is given. Typically, around 4 peer reviewers, who are experts in the research area proposed, would be required. The decisions are made by expert panels comprised of researchers in New Zealand and Australia. There are no pure ophthalmic/vision science panels.

## **3. Which patient advocacy groups, if any, are active in the area?**

- Blind Low Vision NZ (<https://blindlowvision.org.nz>)
- Save Sight Society (<https://www.savesightsociety.org.nz>)
- Glaucoma NZ (<https://glaucoma.org.nz>)
- Retina NZ (<https://retina.org.nz>)

- Fred Hollows Foundation (<https://www.hollows.org.nz>)

#### 4. Are there existing national/regional organizations that work towards improving research funding/policy?

**The Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Ophthalmologists** is the major professional body for the training and professional development of ophthalmologists in Australia and New Zealand. It advocates working with government and policy development in the delivery of eye health care and providing quality education, training and continuing professional development. <https://ranzco.edu>

**The NZ Association of Optometrists** is the major professional body for the training and professional development of optometrists in New Zealand. It liaises with the government concerning the regulation of optometrists, provides continuing education for its members and works with government departments on standards related to eye health and vision. <https://www.nzao.co.nz>

**The New Zealand National Eye Centre (NZ-NEC)** includes clinicians, clinician-scientists and vision-scientists working in the area of eye health, vision research and education in New Zealand. It provides a platform to support undergraduate and postgraduate teaching, develop community outreach programmes and support collaborative research submissions in competitive grant acquisition, as well as contractual work with industry. <https://www.fmhs.auckland.ac.nz/en/faculty/nz-nec.html>

These organizations help to highlight the importance of eye health and vision but the direct extent of this on improving research funding/policy per se is unknown

#### 5. How do scientists currently contribute to the existing funding/policymaking/advocacy process, if at all?

Scientists can contribute through membership of the above-mentioned societies.

#### 6. When are science funding/policy decisions made?

Generally, these are made annually.

## 7. What kinds of opportunities exist for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers?

Can scientists invite decision makers to their lab/institution to see their work firsthand?

Yes, although this rarely happens.

Do the funding/policy organizations hold open meetings or solicit comments from the public that researchers can participate in?

Yes. Many charities such as the AMRF hold special events and research lectures which allow an up close and personal with researchers who have benefited from funding.

In general, the opportunities for scientists to interact with funders and policymakers for funding agencies is limited. Funders such as the HRC and Marsden hold workshops at various universities, but this is more to explain the application process rather than canvassing researchers for comments and suggestions regarding the application and evaluation process

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