

The cover features a solid blue background. A large, faint, light blue Māori koru pattern is centered, forming a cross-like shape that extends towards the edges. The text is white and positioned in the upper left quadrant of the cover.

Te Rautaki a te Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa 2025-2029

*NZCER Strategy
2025-2029*

Vision

A leading voice for education in Aotearoa, transforming research, policy, and teaching practice to realise equitable and excellent outcomes for learners, whānau, and communities.

Purpose

Guided by Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research Act 1972, NZCER weaves together mātauranga Māori and diverse knowledge systems to inform, influence, and deliver high-quality research, resources, and services. We provide research-informed insights and recommendations that enhance educational policy and practice, support teaching and learning, and promote the wellbeing of learners, whānau, and communities.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) underpins the work of Rangahau Mātauranga o Aotearoa / NZCER.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed between Māori and the Crown, underpins our work at NZCER. We are committed to upholding the relational responsibilities both of kāwanatanga and of tino rangatiratanga within the education sector. Through our research, resources, and services, we support and advise both Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti—those who have come to call Aotearoa their home—on educational matters in this land.

Our Te Tiriti o Waitangi policy identifies how we give effect to the principles of te Tiriti, and how the preamble, articles, and whakapuaki lead NZCER’s work and form our staff responsibilities.

Tangata Whenua	Tangata Tiriti
At NZCER we recognise and uphold the strengths of relationships between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti. We are committed to equity and ensuring that the voices of all people are heard, respected, and reflected in all aspects of our mahi.	
Tangata Whenua is a Tiriti partner. We uphold the principle of mana ōrite by supporting the educational research aspirations of Tangata Whenua across Aotearoa. We honour the First Nation status of Māori, hapū, and whānau, supporting mātauranga Māori and Māori-led methodologies and approaches within our research and practice.	Tangata Tiriti share a responsibility to honour its intent and uphold its values. We are committed to supporting all ethnic groups within Aotearoa/New Zealand. We will ensure that Pacific voices, methodologies, and worldviews are upheld in our educational research and practice. We value the diverse cultures, identities and perspectives of all ethnic communities.

Values

Our values shape our culture and what we care about.

We value: **Motuhaketanga**—independence; **Auahatanga**—creativity and innovation; **Mahi ngātahi**—collaboration; and **Rangatiratanga**—leadership.

Overarching all of what we do is a **values system** that shapes how we act and relate:

- **Tika**—we do what is right by acting with integrity, fairness, and shared values

- **Pono**—we are honest, seek truth, and consider all perspectives
- **Whanaungatanga**—we value relationships and reciprocal partnerships
- **Manaakitanga**—we respect others and treat them with generosity and care
- **Ako**—we nurture a culture of ongoing learning.

Strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities help us achieve our purpose. We describe our position, strategic focus, and our approach in each of the five priorities.

Improving equity in education

Kia kotahi te hoe

Working together as one

We are committed to improving equity by helping shape education systems that recognise and nurture the strengths, hopes, and dreams of all people.

Our mahi centres on groups impacted by systemic barriers and educational injustice, and on challenging the structures that uphold inequity. We work to enable and illuminate the conditions for teaching, learning, wellbeing, and achievement—especially where these are constrained, overlooked, or denied.

Māori educational aspirations anchor our work

Hai punga te wawata

Anchoring our aspirations

We uphold the right of Māori to learn as Māori and to thrive through education that honours Māori language, culture, and identity, in line with our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Our focus is grounded in the evolving aspirations of iwi, hapū, whānau, and ākonga Māori. Kairangahau Māori work in partnership with Māori communities to embed kaupapa Māori approaches across research, policy, and practice. Tangata Tiriti allies contribute to this kaupapa by working alongside kaimahi Māori to support and advance Māori educational aspirations.

Strengthening aromatawai and assessment for learning

Hī ake ana te matau, ki te whai ao, ki te ao mārama

Raise the fish-hook, from the unseen depths to the world of light

We are committed to strengthening both aromatawai and assessment in ways that promote learning, affirm identity, and support equitable outcomes.

We support educators, whānau, and policymakers through strengths-based, low-stakes aromatawai and assessment that generate meaningful insights. We provide robust, culturally grounded tools, support, monitoring and research to guide decisions, foster progress and achievement, and improve learning.

Centring Indigenous knowledge in education

Taia te wai (o te waka) kia pai ai te whakatere

Bail the water (of the canoe) so it may manoeuvre shoreward and seaward

We believe that restoring the rightful place of Indigenous identities, knowledge systems, and aspirations—both ancestral and evolving—is essential to transforming education in Aotearoa.

Our mahi embeds mātauranga Māori and Pacific knowledge systems across our work in education, and we make space for other Indigenous knowledge. By doing so, we help steer education towards a more just and inclusive future—one that truly reflects the diverse communities we serve.

Transforming education in a changing world

**Tākiritia te rā (o te waka), kia kau takawiwini
kia kau takawawana ki tua o te pae**

Unfurl the sail (of the canoe) so it may glide fearlessly beyond the distant horizon

We see ourselves as wayfinders—committed to collectively navigating bold and transformative change in education.

Through partnerships and collaboration, we draw on community-based knowledge, foster collective innovation, and surface insights that arise from uncertainty and diverse perspectives. By investigating the implications of technological, environmental, cultural, and societal shifts, our work helps to shape thinking, guide action, policy and practice.

About NZCER

Whakatere tōmua

Whakatere tōmua anchors our aspirations—hai punga te wawata kia rere ki whea atu, ki whea mai.

Our approach centres on whakatere tōmua / wayfinding. Whakatere tōmua is our mahi.

Whakatere tōmua is about utilising the concepts of wayfinding—the voyaging spirit, navigation, and waka—as ways to describe the NZCER mahere. The concept of wayfinding or navigation prompts and provokes images and values that are located in the action of stepping off solid land that we know well, and accepting the challenge to embark on new journeys. We will travel across sometimes familiar, and sometimes uncharted, waters.

Background

NZCER is an independent statutory body committed to the public good in education.

We were established in 1934 with philanthropic funding from the Carnegie Corporation and have operated under the New Zealand Council for Educational Research Act since 1972. The Act sets out our official functions:

- a) To foster the study of, and research into, educational and related matters, and to prepare and publish such reports as may, in its opinion, be of value to teachers and others.
- b) To furnish information, advice, and assistance to people and organisations concerned with education and similar fields.

The NZCER Board comprises five elected members (chosen by an electoral college) and one member appointed by the Minister of Education. Up to three additional members may be co-opted by the Board.

Our work spans the breadth of the learning journey, from early childhood through schooling and tertiary education to adult and community learning, reflecting our commitment to lifelong and lifewide learning.

Our staff span Research & Development, Sales, and Business Support teams. Te Wāhanga, our team of kairangahau Māori, prioritises kaupapa Māori research and plays a central role in ensuring mātauranga Māori is embedded in our work.

We often describe our mahi as providing **research, resources, and services**. A fuller description includes **conducting research, publishing books and journals, developing assessment and survey resources, offering advisory support, providing evaluations, delivering and supporting digital assessment and survey platforms, providing library services, delivering psychometric services, and offering expert advice**.

NZCER's funding comes from a mix of contestable research contracts, a government grant called Te Pae Tawhiti, and sales from our assessments, resources, and services. Te Pae Tawhiti enables us to build an independent programme of research. We pursue projects that align with our strategic priorities and areas of expertise—mahi that we believe will have transformational impact on education in Aotearoa.