

Annual Report Summary 2017-2018



The full version of this report including the Financial Statements is available at www.nzcer.org.nz/about-nzcer/corporate-documents

**NZCER inspires education.
Ka whakaaweā te ao
mātauranga e NZCER.**

Tēnei mātou — ABOUT NZCER

Our purpose | Tō mātou kaupapa

NZCER inspires education. We play a leading role in research, developing tools, and providing services that drive effective learning and positive change in policy and practice.

Our strategic priorities | Ngā whāinga tōmua a te rautaki

To achieve our purpose, we have identified three strategic priorities.

NZCER will:

1. contribute to a socially just and equitable education system
2. improve education outcomes for every Māori learner
3. lead thinking and shape the future of education.

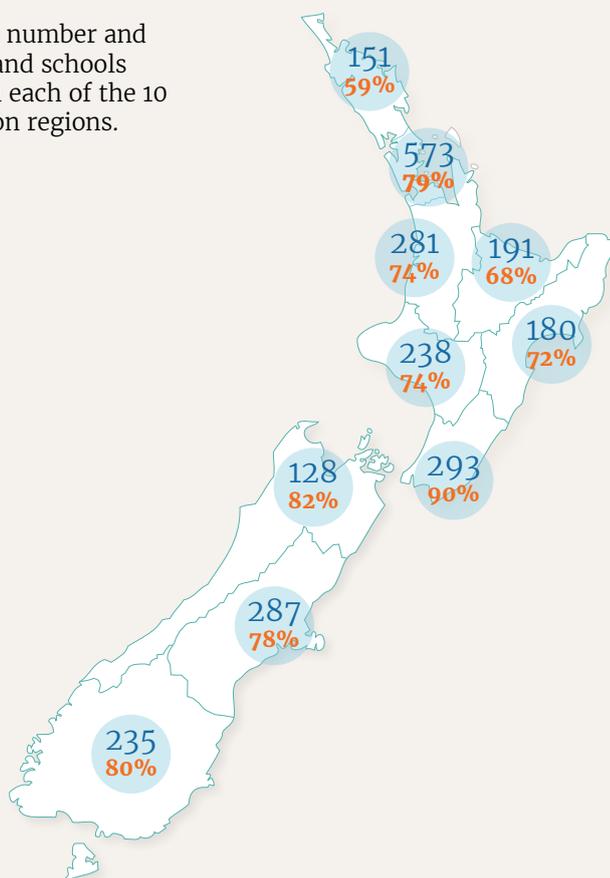
Te whātoro me te whakaaweawe o ā mātou mahi

—THE REACH AND IMPACT OF OUR WORK

All our work is based on research. More than half of our staff are directly involved in research activity, as researchers, statisticians, resource developers, assessment specialists, and psychometricians. Their work is captured in research reports and also informs our books and journals, and assessments, surveys, tools, and resources.

SCHOOLS AND KURA ALL OVER THE COUNTRY USE OUR ASSESSMENTS, TOOLS, AND PUBLICATIONS

This map shows the number and percentage of kura and schools that use our work in each of the 10 Ministry of Education regions.



Research overview

Our research work falls into two broad categories: that which is funded directly by the Government Grant, and the work we win through competitive tendering.

The Government Grant is just under 15% of our total income. We seek feedback on priorities for research as we develop this research programme and ensure it is aligned to our strategic priorities. This year we used the Government Grant to explore progress and achievement, te reo Māori and Māori education, student wellbeing, and system capability. Many of these projects extend over more than one financial year or are ongoing, such as the national surveys of schools.

The majority of our research work is commissioned by clients. Our research capability is wide-ranging—from early learning to tertiary education. Our focus is on leadership, teaching and learning, learner agency and engagement, and curriculum and assessment. The activities we undertake as part of our research contracts are diverse, spanning statistical and psychometric analysis, evaluation, data gathering, surveys, advice, and support.

Our research reflects our strategic priorities

Our strategic priorities prompt us to make a positive difference. Because our research is central to everything we do, we use the priorities to guide what we do and how we do it.

We began developing an impact framework

Our efforts to achieve our priority of contributing to a socially just and equitable education system include considering how we measure the impact of our work. In this first year

of our 5-year strategy, we began developing an impact framework.

We created a cultural perspectives tool to guide us as we develop more culturally responsive resources.

We engaged with Māori as learners, teachers, and policy makers

Our priority to improve education outcomes for every Māori learner sharpens our focus on an area of ongoing work. Since the creation of Te Wāhanga, our dedicated Māori research unit, in the 1970s, we have engaged with Māori as learners, teachers, and policy makers.

For a client, Te Wāhanga surveyed activities and resources that are intended to support the revitalisation of te reo Māori in homes and communities.

We continued work on a project that looks at the maintenance and revitalisation of te reo Māori in kura and schools. We completed research into how learners transition between institutions. We are developing a te reo Māori assessment tool that will support all learners of te reo.

We lead the way with online tools and resources

Our priority to lead thinking and shape the future of education challenges us to be bold. We have a strong history of success in applying our research—to support policy decisions, to provide advice on curricula, to inform teaching practice, and to improve assessment. We continue to lead the way with accessible and adaptable online tools and resources.

NZCER STAFF APPOINTED TO ADVISORY PANELS

NZCER's expertise is highly sought after. This year our staff were appointed to various panels contributing to review of the sector.

Cathy Wylie, one of our three Chief Researchers, was appointed to the taskforce leading the review of Tomorrow's Schools.

Charles Darr, Manager of Assessment Design & Reporting, was appointed to the Ministerial Advisory Group on the review of NCEA and the Curriculum, Progress and Achievement Ministerial Advisory Group.

Graeme Cosslett, Director, was appointed to the Education Workforce Governance Strategy Group.

We researched student wellbeing

NZCER's first strategic priority is to contribute to a socially just and equitable education system; we believe that, for students, having a sense of belonging and wellbeing at school is central to such a system.

The idea of wellbeing is integrated into *The New Zealand Curriculum* (NZC), with statements about developing young people who are “confident ... positive in their own identity ... resilient ... able to relate well to others...”¹ We have been researching how schools can contribute to students' wellbeing for some years now.

This year, we completed a project called Making a Difference to Student

Wellbeing, producing an infographic summary and data report. We included questions about wellbeing in the National Survey of Primary and Intermediate Schools 2016. We are continuing our evaluation of the Play sport initiative, which is intended to support wellbeing through a focus on quality physical education learning and physical activity. We also engaged with sector groups that focus on student wellbeing.

1 Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Games for Learning



The Games for Learning project investigated the potential and actual role of games to support transformative learning opportunities in New Zealand schools. The project was well aligned with our strategic priorities of contributing to a socially just and equitable education system and leading thinking and shaping the future of education.

The main research question was “To what extent can games and gaming enable learners to develop their potential as expressed in the vision and intentions of *The New Zealand Curriculum*?”

The team was interested in how games can deepen and enrich students' engagement with learning in and across NZC.

The initial focus was digital games, including simulations, and game-building platforms and environments. It also looked at how non-digital games are used, adapted, or created by learners and teachers.

The research was highly interactive: actual game play was necessary! This was most evident in the 2-day conference that was part of the project.

The Games for Learning conference took place at Te Papa Tongarewa in August and September.

We had 210 attendees, of whom 32 were also speakers or facilitators. They came from all over the world and included teachers, policy makers, game designers, game developers, and students.

The conference byline was “For equity and social impact”; these ideas shaped the programme.

The featured talks covered traditional Māori games, a digital game that uses the stories of the Iñupiat people, and what video games can teach us about learning and literacy.

Professional services

Our professional services include assessments, tools, and surveys developed from our research, as well as advisory and support.

Kura and schools are the primary audience for these services. We also maintain and support the *Literacy and Numeracy for Adults Assessment Tool*, used in compulsory education, tertiary education institutions, and workplace learning.

Taku Reo helps understand student perceptions of te reo Māori

In October 2017, we launched *Taku Reo*, a survey tool for Years 4 to 8 in English-medium schools. The tool helps school leaders understand student perceptions of te reo Māori in four language domains: classroom, school, community, and home.

Junior Science reached the 12-month milestone

We launched *Junior Science: Thinking with Evidence* (Years 4 to 6) in June 2017. Initial response suggests it is meeting teachers'

needs both as an assessment tool and as a source of inspiration for science lessons.

More than 300 schools used the TSP

We launched the *Teaching and School Practices Survey Tool (TSP)* in Term 2 of 2017. The TSP encourages reflection and inquiry. By the end of Term 3, 335 principals and 4,355 teachers had used the tool. We got good feedback on both the usefulness of the reports and the ease of use.

Our workshops and webinars build evaluative capability

Our education advisers and support specialists developed online workshops and webinars about our tools.

Participants have seen greater potential in tools they thought they knew and increased their evaluative capability.

NZCER Press

We consolidated our reputation as award-winning publishers of te reo Māori titles this year, and produced diverse and innovative books, journals, and resources.

The fourth edited collection of essays in te reo Māori, *Te Mauri o Te Whare*, edited by Agnes McFarland and Tairahia Black, won two awards at Massey University's Ngā Kupu Ora Awards 2017, celebrating Māori books and journalism.

Another highlight was the publication of three highly successful

decks of curriculum design cards developed by NZCER researchers led by Rose Hipkins.

NZCER published eight books and eight journals across our five titles.

We published 23 research reports by NZCER researchers and 11 reports from projects funded by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative.

Psychological Test Services (PTS)

PTS provides specialised psychometric tests for use in education, human resources, and clinical psychology. We promote these tools through networks of people with the appropriate qualifications and through partnerships with suppliers.

We simplified and strengthened our registration

Our registration system is designed to let us approve sales to appropriately qualified individuals. This year we looked at how we could simplify registration, whilst retaining its strength. We collaborated with NZQA and SPELD NZ to consider how we could achieve these goals.

The Leadership Circle continued to grow

PTS continued to be the official distributor of The Leadership Circle in Aotearoa New Zealand. It measures factors correlated to both effective and ineffective leadership against a global norm base of high-level leaders from organisations in almost every sector.

Te kupu whakataki a te kaiwhakahaere

—CHAIR'S FOREWORD

FIONA PIMM, CHAIR

The 2017–2018 year saw many changes for NZCER, both within the organisation and in its operating environment.



The changes included my becoming Chair, following Dr Peter Coolbear. I thank him for his guidance of the Board and his contribution to NZCER.

We set new priorities to guide the organisation to 2021. The priorities are summed up in our purpose of “inspiring education”; this report

shows early progress towards fulfilling that purpose.

The Government’s intense engagement with education has the potential to generate many opportunities for NZCER to inspire education. The organisation prepared itself to maximise these opportunities by reviewing its structure and operating model.

In this changing environment, NZCER continued to produce high-quality research and maintained strong and respectful relationships that ensure NZCER is integral to education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Fiona Pimm

He arotakenga mō te tau

—THE YEAR IN REVIEW

GRAEME COSSLETT, DIRECTOR

What we do is both shaped by and shapes education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Education is an environment in which we expect and invite change.



Our research, publications, and tools are valued for the rich picture they paint of what is happening in education and in learning. The particular value of our work comes from our ability to go beyond questions about what is, to extend to what might be. The rigour and expertise we bring to our work means it is used to inform decision making by policy makers, organisations, and individuals.

We are a not-for-profit organisation that earns most of its income from contestable research contracts and

sales of our publications, products, and services. Everything we do must contribute to our purpose of inspiring education. It must also be aligned with our values of independence, collaboration, innovation, and integrity.

This year saw us begin to make progress towards the strategic priorities that will guide our activities to 2021. These priorities support our purpose: to inspire education.

As we move into our second year of the new strategic priorities, our work programme continues to grow with strategic clarity and focus. As the Chair notes, the Government is undertaking significant engagement with the education sector and our Government Grant, contestable research, advisory, and services are all making a significant contribution to this work programme.

Graeme Cosslett