

Background information - Teaching and Learning Research Initiative

In May 2002 the Government established the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) programme to build knowledge about teaching and learning which in turn will lead to significantly improved outcomes for learners. Research undertaken in all areas of the education sector, from early childhood centres to industry training organisations, kura and wānanga, was eligible for funding under the Initiative.

To enhance the potential of the research findings to inform practice, the Initiative emphasises partnerships between researchers and practitioners, with this approach expected at all stages of the process from the research design to communicating the results to teachers and other educators.

The project priorities determine there must be demonstrable strategic, research and practice value based on six principles:

- the research will address themes of strategic importance to education in New Zealand
- it will draw on related overseas work and build upon New Zealand-based research evidence
- the research will address strategic themes and be forward looking
- the project design will to enable substantive and robust findings
- the research will recognise the central role of the teacher in learning
- the projects will be undertaken as a partnership between researchers and practitioners.

Three levels of funding were available under the scheme:

- A - large-scale projects (maximum \$400,000) of up to three years with a \$150,000 maximum for any project in the first year.
- B - medium-scale projects (maximum \$180,000) of up to two years with a cap of \$90,000 for any project in any one year.
- C - small-scale projects (\$15,000–\$30,000) often with an emphasis on practitioner-driven, researcher-supported projects.

The programme has annual funding for three years of \$1 million, although funding for projects of more than one year is conditional upon continued government funding of the TLRI and on satisfactory performance during the first funding cycle.

Structure

An Advisory Board, convened by the Ministry of Education, has been set up to provide an overview of the Initiative and to make key recommendations about it. The board comprises representative from various education sector organisations:

Rob McIntosh (Chair), Group Manager, Ministry of Education
Chief Executive, New Zealand Teachers' Council (to be advised)
Chris Lilly, Senior Analyst, Tertiary Education Commission
Professor Clive McGee, School of Education, Te Kura Toi Tangata, University of Waikato
Mike Hollings, National Manager Analysis and Policy, Education Review Office
Robert Stratford, Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Maori Development
Gabby Makisi, Teacher (representing Pasifika) Rongotai College
Dr Helen May, Head of School of Education, Victoria University

The Board's roles include setting the strategic direction of the initiative, setting priorities and criteria for research programme funding, and recommending to the Minister the research proposals to be funded.

The New Zealand Council of Educational Research (NZCER) has been contracted to co-ordinate the management of the TLRI programme, and a team of specialists in key areas of educational research, led by NZCER Director Robyn Baker, has been established to facilitate the initiative and assist the researchers. For more information on the Initiative, contact Christina Smits at NZCER on (04) 802-1461 or tlri@nzcer.org.nz, PO Box 3237, Wellington, New Zealand, website www.tlri.org.nz.

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