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Renewing the Aotearoa New Zealand Science System: Summary

The New Zealand Association of Scientists

The effects of Covid-19 reveal some of the cracks in our science system. This points to the need for its review and renewal. Covid-19 now, and climate and biodiversity very soon, will require a different way of valuing and connecting with science. The NZAS proposes an eleven-point wide-ranging and empowered review of the science system.

1. Start by valuing people - make them, their careers, and their communities, the foundation of a good science system. Build a culture of inspirational ideas and knowledge that is grounded in what is possible locally.
2. Sow and nurture the seeds for more Māori and Pasifika scientists and their pathways to contribute and benefit.
3. (Re)Create a Ministry focused on Science and Research in a way that balances ministerial connectivity with all the aspects of Aotearoa New Zealand that stand to benefit from science and research.
4. Develop better pathways for science and policy to connect – and communicate how this works to all stakeholders.
5. Improve alignment across the system so that components work together rather than in competition.
6. Clarify and support what universities and government-funded research institutes are for and support that at the board level.
7. Science for the nation – would a new version of DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research) do better than separate institutes?
8. Develop a better approach to key challenges faced by the nation, by improving the ways in which teams and organisations are brought together to tackle them.
9. Build a nuanced understanding of our place in global research and what is preventing better collaborations.
10. Determine pathways to leverage from Aotearoa New Zealand's non-science strengths.
11. Develop processes to generate the data and evidence to assess the system and its impact.

A connected, evidence-based, adequately funded, harmonised research ecosystem is a goal we need to pursue. Now is the time.

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