

iPEN

*Impact Planning
Evaluation Network*

RESEARCH IMPACT

EXTERNAL
STAKEHOLDER HUI

14 FEBRUARY 2023

DISCUSSION SUMMARY



BACKGROUND

On Tuesday 14th February, iPEN (the [Impact Planning and Evaluation Network](#)) invited a diverse range of people from across New Zealand's Research Science and Innovation to discuss research impact.

The core purpose of the hui was to share and explore perspectives and approaches to research impact, and to understand if there were areas of shared interest where people could work together to support more and better impact from research¹.

The impetus for the hui emerged from a systems analysis that sought to understand barriers and enablers of impact. The iPEN group was keen to understand how characteristic their findings were of the broader system, and if so, what the analysis and options for action meant to those working in the system more generally.

The hui was recognised as just a first informal step in progressing the research impact agenda in New Zealand. The participant list reflected the snowball and formative stage the conversation is at more generally. Attendance was also impacted by Cyclone Gabrielle.

Following this discussion, two specific bits of feedback were sought: If the day had been worthwhile and why, and what follow-up action people felt the whole group should focus on progressing.

This document briefly summarises the day and is intended as a reference and resource for both attendees and others. It is not exhaustive and its brevity means some more specific actions and suggestions are not included.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF THE DAY

CONNECTING AND RELATIONSHIPS BUILDING WAS THE HIGHLIGHT

Overall, participants felt the day had been extremely worthwhile, with the opportunity to connect and build relationships with others in the system who had an interest in supporting research impact as being the most valuable part of the day.

There was a strong appetite for further opportunities to connect and agreement to aim for another hui this year, with the agenda to be 'co-created' to ensure the discussion covered the needs of the widest number of attendees. There was gratitude that iPEN had taken the initiative to organise the event, and to make it as broad and welcoming as possible.

THE TE ARA PAERANGI FUTURE PATHWAYS REFORM IS CREATING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE DISCUSSIONS ON HOW TO SYSTEMICALLY SUPPORT RESEARCH IMPACT

It was noted that the current Future Pathways programme of system reform is stimulating interest in how research impact can be better supported as part of any future changes. Opportunities for discussions like this are of great interest to MBIE and they value the feedback and chance to engage with the sector via forums such as this.

¹ See Annex for for a list of attendees and a copy of the agenda with links to background material.

IPEN'S EXPERIENCE IS ECHOED ACROSS THE SYSTEM

The conversation on the day was wide-ranging, but it was clear that the interests and experiences of iPEN overlapped relatively extensively with others.

There were some stakeholders (e.g., some representatives of National Science Challenges) who could speak to even more concrete examples of 'what works', and others who are clearly still very early on in their impact journey and seeking as much guidance as possible. The recent report *Building New Zealand's Capacity for Science-based Open Innovation* published by the Science for Technological Innovation NSC was a particularly notable example, with findings and themes overlapping strongly with iPEN's.

SOME NUANCES REFLECT CONTEXT, BUT THE FUNDAMENTALS IPEN IDENTIFIED ARE SOUND

The relevance or value of thinking about research impact for different attendees depended somewhat on their core business. However, it was clear that this was more a matter of how the concept of research impact is contextualised. For example, how fundamental research is connected to impact will be different to research that is further down the development or application pathway.

The importance of clarity in terminology and language was also noted. Some terms are not well defined and confuse many in the sector (e.g., science excellence), and it was also noted that talking about 'science' instead of 'research' was exclusionary if we want to achieve a consistent understanding across the RSI sector. It was acknowledged that the materials developed and shared by iPEN necessarily reflected the CRI context, which is grounded in science, but if tools, resources etc were to be taken more widely there would need to be some reframing to research rather than science. Many of the terms used do not have specific widely agreed terminology, which highlighted the role of those designing the system from a policy perspective in addressing this and getting everyone 'speaking the same language'.

THE MĀORI PERSPECTIVE IS STILL LARGELY ABSENT FROM THE RESEARCH IMPACT CONVERSATION

The critical importance of ensuring there is a strong Māori perspective (led or co-led by Māori) in shaping the conversation around what research impact is in New Zealand and what is necessary to support it, was also repeatedly highlighted. It is a point that iPEN has been aware of and seeking to address wherever possible. Capacity in the RSI system is a considerable barrier to progressing this. Going forward there might be opportunities to leverage more systematically off the insights and work some of the NSCs have led in this area.

RESEARCH IMPACT IS A TEAM SPORT

The group repeatedly identified the importance of acknowledging that research impact involves many activities and a diverse range of expertise. However this is not well understood and instead, the activities are considered as something that should be funded 'outside' the research funding envelope. The complexity and sophistication of what needs to occur at each stage of the 'cycle' is complete invisible for the most part and is consequently systemically un-supported.

HOW TO DELIVER IMPACT FROM RESEARCH NEEDS MORE ATTENTION/RESOURCING

It was noted that the discourse around research impact and an appetite for clarity on terminology as noted above is growing, but what is perhaps needed more is guidance on how to 'do' it. For example,

what kinds of activities, teams, designs, tools, skills and other resources are needed. Some of the work that the NSCs have done, along with iPEN's own work is a great start but not necessary or sufficient on their own given the scale and systemic change we are talking about.

AN APPETITE FOR MORE NETWORKING

Discussions on next steps were positive, with attendees having strong appetites for 'more action'. Specific 'interest areas' were less obvious, although there were some tangible opportunities for iPEN to take action or follow-up on, on behalf of the group.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Follow up actions generally fell into two areas:

1. Actions that focus on creating and expanding the opportunities and platforms to discuss research impact, and to foster the development of connections between those with an interest in research impact.
2. Specific opportunities to work together to develop and share collateral or examples that will support others understanding and/or deliver research impact and support the practice of HOW to do it.

Specific next steps and actions included:

1. iPEN to write and circulate a summary (this document) of the day to be used as both reference and resource to be disseminated to all (iPEN will also publish this on its website once agreed).
2. Test jointly organising another hui in 4 – 6 months' time. It is yet to be determined who might be willing and able to assist in organising (please get in touch if you / your organisation is), and what format people would prefer (online or face-to-face). iPEN will reach out on this in the coming weeks.
3. iPEN also committed to following up with several groups with a strong interest in research impact, including the Association of CoRES, the NSCs, and URONZ (Impact Working Group). This is underway, along with our ongoing engagement with commercialisation research network partners such as KiwiNet; MBIE's Impact Working Group and Future Pathways; and follow-up with other agencies we have less connection with presently: MfE, DoC, MPI.
4. iPEN would like to encourage attendees to share resources or other news that supports research impact in New Zealand, which iPEN can share via its newsletter and website.

Other options for follow up suggested by attendees included:

- a. connect with the Office of the Chief Scientist (DPMC) to provide ideas for them to include in their current work on improving the science/policy interface (see here for the work Hannah McKerchar has done as part of her internship)
- b. secure a slot to present at the Science Forum at Parliament (arrange via Universities NZ/Science NZ, NOTE: earliest opportunity would be 2024)
- c. explore if there are more systematic ways to engage with the Chief Science Advisor Forum
- d. developing a shared impact case study library that conforms to a template of some kind to illustrate a diverse range of examples of impact (and how it happened/was delivered) from a range of organisations and disciplines/sectors.

A NOTE ON IPEN'S IMPACT PATHWAYS GUIDANCE

At the hui iPEN's working group on impact pathways shared some early work they had completed to support the development of specific guidance material for researchers and scientists.

The feedback was extremely helpful, and the working group are now progressing the development of this material. The primary audience for the guidance is scientists and researchers in the CRIs. Consequently, the next iteration of this work will engage directly with this group of users. The working group is happy to provide an update on their progress at any follow up hui.

ANNEX

HUI ATTENDANCE LIST

Shaded names are iPEN representatives

| NAME | Organisation and interest/role they represent | Attendance |
|---------------------------------|--|------------|
| Alan Grey | NIWA (iPEN) | In person |
| Alison Slade | MBIE (Investment Fund Manager – Endeavour & Impact Working Group Chair) | In person |
| Annabel McAleer | AgR (NSC - Our Land and Water) | In person |
| Anne-marie Manzano | AgR (iPEN) | In person |
| Benno Blaschke (him/his) | MBIE | virtual |
| Bronwen Kelly | Universities NZ | virtual |
| Chanel Partridge | iPEN | In person |
| Claire Stewart | Scion (iPEN) | In person |
| Daniel Milosavljevic | Manaaki Whenua (iPEN) | In person |
| Danielle Hannan | Callahan Innovation | In person |
| Franca Buelow (her) | Canterbury University (Bioprotection Aotearoa CoRE) | In person |
| Hannah McKerchar | Riddet Institute/DMPC (intern to develop guidance to support translation of science to policy) | In person |
| Helen Celia | AgResearch (iPEN) | In person |
| Helen Percy | AgResearch | virtual |
| Jace Carson | Canterbury University (Research Office) | In person |
| Kate Murray | Canterbury University (Research Office) | In person |
| Kara Scally-Irvine | iPEN | In person |
| Katrin Webb | MPI (Science Policy) | virtual |
| Kirsty McGregor | Scion (iPEN) | In person |
| Maria Larcombe | Otago University (Research Office, Health Sciences) | In person |
| Mathirimangalam Srinivasan (MS) | MPI | In person |

| | | |
|------------------|--|-----------|
| Melanie Ruffell | Massey University (Riddet Institute CoRE) | virtual |
| Nic Scott | MBIE (Future Pathways) | virtual |
| Nicola Shorten | GNS (iPEN) | In person |
| Rosanne Ellis | Waikato Link / University of Waikato | virtual |
| Ross Laurence | Manaaki Whenua (iPEN) | In person |
| Ruth Berry | BRANZ (NSC - Building Better Homes, Towns and Cities) | virtual |
| Sarah Meadows | MPI (Manager Science Policy) | virtual |
| Stewart Graham | PFR (iPEN) | In person |
| Sudesh Sharma | ESR (iPEN) | In person |
| Suzanne Vallance | Manaaki Whenua | In person |
| Tania Gerrard | GNS (Te Ara Pūtaiao) | virtual |
| Tracy Williams | PFR (iPEN) | In person |
| Urs Daellenbach | Victoria University (NSC – Science for Technological Innovation) | In person |
| Veronika Alexova | Manaaki Whenua (iPEN) | In person |

Apologies from the following organisations not otherwise represented above:

- Health Research Council (Jessica Glen)
- KiwiNet (James Hutchinson)
- TEC (Dan Haines Cohen and Peter Gilbert)
- Auckland University Research Office (Faith Welch/URONZ impact working group)

IPEN STAKEHOLDER HUI AGENDA

OPPORTUNITIES TO ENABLE & ENHANCE RESEARCH IMPACT IN NEW ZEALAND

WHERE: Tekapo Room, NIWA Christchurch

WHEN: TUESDAY 14th February 9.30 – 3.30

WHAT & WHY:

- **Explore areas of shared interest** amongst stakeholders ('system actors') in the RSI system
- **Identify if there are opportunities to have collective influence and/or to take action** to enable and enhance the delivery of research impact within the RSI system.

BACKGROUND:

Last year iPEN completed an analysis of the RSI system to identify systemic barriers and enablers from science and research. This work was completed to support those who work in and with the RSI system (specifically – because of iPEN's focus - but not limited to CRIs) and to identify opportunities to improve the system's ability to support impact.

In this we:

- identified and described a cyclical process that describes critical steps in delivering impact from research and science
- identified and described seven themes that either enable or act as barriers to creating impact
- used systems thinking (specifically the concept of leverage points) to identify opportunities where changes could be made and understand what influence these might have

Our process included sharing our emerging analysis with stakeholders (including MBIE) and briefing and seeking feedback from the Science New Zealand Board (our CEs). However, we are also aware that other actors in the system who have expertise and experience are also exploring how to improve the delivery of research impact. We recognise that making progress will require a joined-up approach to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.

This workshop aims to help kickstart such efforts amongst those we know who have shared interests, approaches, and motivations in research impact, and a willingness to coordinate and collaborate on our collective efforts.

WORKSHOP AGENDA

| SESSION | FOCUS | TIMING |
|---------|--|--|
| 1 | Introductions: Who are you (organisation, role etc). What your interest in research impact is, and your current approaches to supporting its delivery. | 9.30 – 10.15 |
| | MORNING TEA | 10:15 -10.30 |
| 2 | Sharing our perspectives and experience: Using iPENs systems analysis as a starting point: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What most resonates with you from your perspective? Are their gaps and nuances from your experience and perspective? Do you have questions for us based on this shared discussion? <i>If you have time, your group is welcome to start considering 3 (opportunities)</i> | 10:30 -12.00 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10.45 – 11.30 Breakout group discussion 11.30 – 12.00 Feedback to whole room |
| | LUNCH | 12.00 – 12.45 |
| 3 | Discussion on opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What are our priorities as individuals and entities? Where do these overlap the most? Do these provide clear opportunities for collaborative efforts? If so, what could we do? | 12.45 – 1.45 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 mins in groups 45 mins sharing to whole room |
| | BREAK | 1.45 – 2.00 |
| 4 | Feedback on iPEN impact pathways guidance project: iPEN will present our preliminary work on identifying and describing impact pathways that typically exist in our RSI system. The intention is that this will support the development of guidelines for our scientists/researchers, however if these are more widely useful, they could be expanded (within reason). This session would serve as a preliminary test of our thinking, to ensure we haven't missed anything as well as to explore its utility with wider RSI stakeholders. | 2.00 – 3.00 |
| 5 | Reflections on the day and closing | 3.00 – 3.30 |