

# Royal Society Te Apārangi

[EXPLORE](#) | [DISCOVER](#) | [SHARE](#)

ROYAL  
SOCIETY  
TE APĀRANGI

# Who are we?

---



*We support New Zealanders to explore, discover and share knowledge*

- Te Apārangi fosters a culture that supports science, technology, and the humanities by:
  - raising public awareness, knowledge, and understanding
  - advancing education
- We encourage, promote, and recognise excellence
- We support infrastructure for professional development
- We maintain a Code of Professional Standards and Ethics
- We provide expert advice on important public issues

MARSDEN FUND

TE PŪTEA RANGAHAU  
A MARSDEN

ROYAL  
SOCIETY  
TE APĀRANGI

---

# Applying to the Marsden Fund

<https://royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/marsden/>

November 2025

# What is the Marsden Fund?

---

Named after Sir Ernest Marsden

Funded by the Government

Currently governed by the Marsden Fund Council

- Chair: Professor Gill Dobbie



# Changes for 2026

---

- The Marsden Fund Council will pass recommendations for funding to the new Research Funding New Zealand board at the end of the 2026 round. This has resulted in the following changes:
  - The Terms of Reference and Investment Plan have been updated
  - Another tick box, around the potential for supporting the development of new technologies, has been added for reporting purposes (this is not included as a benefit category)

**Refer to the guidelines for more details!**

# Changes for 2026

---

- Approximately \$55.8 million will be allocated for new grants (aligning with the reduction signalled post-Budget 2025)
- As a result, fewer grants will be awarded in 2026, with the anticipation of a lower success rate
- No Marsden Fund Council Awards will be offered
- Registration for Expressions of Interest will be required two weeks before the close of the first round - to enable appropriate time to assess panel interest and plan accordingly

# What does Marsden support?

---

- Top-level research by top quality investigators
- Research projects that are:
  - Investigator-led (not mission-led) and discrete
  - At the international cutting edge
  - Exploring new ideas with potential for benefit to New Zealand

# Categories of grants (2026)

---

	Maximum amount per year (ex GST)	Duration	Cycle
<b>Fast-Start (emerging researchers)</b>	\$120k	Up to 3 years	Two stages: February (EOI) and June (Full)
<b>Standard (open to any career stage)</b>	Varies by panel (\$240-\$320k)	Up to 3 years	Two stages: February (EOI) and June (Full)



# 2026 Timeline

---

- **4 Feb** EOI registration deadline
- **18 Feb** Closing date for first round  
(noon) *Check your organisation's closing date!*
- **14 May** Invitations to second round
- **25 June** Closing date for full proposals
- **TBA:** Results Announcement  
(Early Nov)

# Eligibility

---

- Open to New Zealand-based researchers:
  - Fast-Start: Contact PI full-time in New Zealand
  - Standard: Contact PI at least 0.5 FTE in New Zealand
- Applicants can only be a PI on **one proposal per year** (and an AI on one more)
- PI exclusion rule applies
- See guidelines for further criteria

# Assessment Criteria

---

## Research

- Proposals must have the potential to lead to quantifiable impacts because of the proposal's novelty, originality, insight and ambition
- Proposals must be rigorous, and should have a basis in prior research and use a sound research method
- The research team must have the ability and capacity to deliver.

## Benefit

- Proposals must demonstrate why the research could be of economic, environmental, or health benefit to New Zealand
- Proposals should demonstrate a clear rationale for the research to be undertaken in New Zealand
- Proposals should develop research skills in New Zealand, particularly those at the post-doctoral level and emerging researchers.

## Vision Mātauranga

- Proposals must consider the relation of the research to the themes of Vision Mātauranga and, **where relevant**, how the project will engage with Māori.

# What is quantifiable impact?

---

*Quantifiable impacts can be defined in various ways including how the research will:*

- contribute to shifting the understanding, and advancing methods, theory and application across and within disciplines;
- lead to economic, environmental or health outcomes for New Zealand beyond its contributions to knowledge and skills development.

# EOI Round

---

Closes in **February**

- **EOI** registration (panel, category and team members)

## Fast-Start and Standard

Submit an **EOI**

- One page of research
- plus benefits / rationale /CVs etc
- Assessed by panels

# Full Round: Submission

---

**Opens in May; closes in June**

## Fast-Start and Standard

- By invitation only
- Six to seven page full proposal, including background, aims, methods, Vision Mātauranga, and benefits/rationale sections
- Assessed by panels and expert international peer review



# Full Round: Assessment

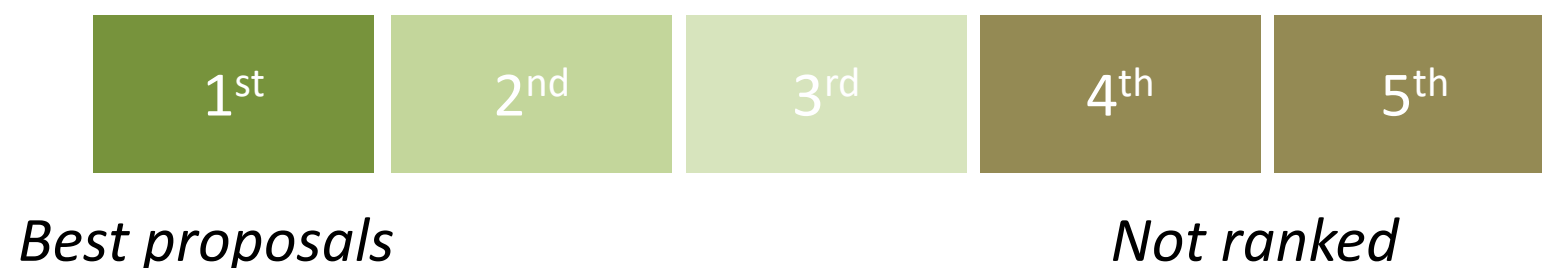
---

- Reviewed by *expert* referees
- Applicants can respond to referee reports
- Proposals are assessed together with referee reports, and applicant responses

# Feedback: EOI round

---

After the **EOI round**, unsuccessful applicants will be told their proposal's ranking, expressed as **quintiles**.



Unsuccessful Fast-Start applicants who are ranked in the top three quintiles can ask for qualitative feedback.

# What are my chances?

---

- Success rate in 2025 was 10.9%  
(Standards: 10.3%; Fast-Starts: 11.9%; MFCA: 40%)
- 107 proposals were offered funding, out of 978
- As Fast-Start success rates are higher than Standards, eligible researchers are encouraged to apply to the Fast-Start category

MARSDEN FUND

TE PŪTEA RANGAHAU  
A MARSDEN

ROYAL  
SOCIETY  
TE APĀRANGI

---

# Tips for producing a quality proposal

November 2025

# Planning your proposal

---

- Know the literature
- Carry out preliminary work
- Choose your team carefully: fit for the job; compatible; skilled (but no window dressing); opportunities for skills development

*Note: Cannot add PIs, AIs after EOI registration (only delete)*

# Planning your proposal

---

- Build your CV – recent performance important

*You have the choice of a standard CV or a narrative CV*

- Use your support: Research Office; successful applicants; recent panellists; HoD / manager

- Familiarise yourself with the Trusted Research Guidance

*Consider any dual use/sensitive technology aspects of your research*



# Panel choice

---

- Biomedical Sciences
- Cellular, Molecular and Physiological Biology
- Earth Sciences and Astronomy
- Ecology, Evolution and Behaviour
- Economics and Human & Behavioural Sciences
- Engineering and Interdisciplinary Sciences
- Mathematical and Information Sciences
- Physics, Chemistry and Biochemistry

*Read the panel definitions carefully. Research the panellists. Seek advice*

# The Marsden Portal

---

- Proposals are submitted via a web-based portal
- Log-in details available from your Research Office or from [marsden@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:marsden@royalsociety.org.nz) for independent researchers
- There is a registration deadline in 2026. You will need to have finalised your **panel**, **grant category** and your **team** by then.
- **Make sure you look at the portal early – don't leave logging in until the last minute!**
- Instructions available in the guidelines

# What sections are required in an EOI?

---

- Research title and team
- Metadata (including benefit tick boxes and **new technologies tick box**)
- 200-word research summary
- **Vision Mātauranga:** theme(s) and rationale (200 words)
- 1 page abstract of proposed **research** (address the research criteria here)
- **Benefits / impact** section
  - 400 words to describe potential benefits and rationale (approximately 2/3 of a page)
- 3 pages references
- 1 page Roles and Resources (Who does what? What do you need?)
- Personnel / FTE table
- CV – one for each investigator (option of standard OR narrative CV)

# Research Title and Summary

---

- Choose a title that is descriptive of your research (avoid quirky titles)
- Your 200–word summary will be sent out to prospective referees should you make it to the full round
  - It should clearly communicate the core question and methods of your work to panellists as well as expert referees

# Metadata change

---

- There is a tick box for identifying proposals which have the potential to support the development of new technologies
- This will be displayed on the front page of the proposal, underneath the tick boxes for the economic, environment and health benefit categories
- Please note however that this is not included as a benefit category

*New technologies refer to emerging or innovative technological advancements that introduce novel capabilities, enhance existing processes, or enable entirely new ways of delivering services, solving problems, or creating value*

# Vision Mātauranga

---

*“Proposals must consider the relation of the research to the themes of Vision Mātauranga and, **where relevant**, how the project will engage with Māori.”*

## EOI round:

- Identify which, if any theme(s) apply
- A comment box is provided to explain your rationale – **whether you indicate any Vision Mātauranga themes or not**



# Proposed Research

---

## Hook – engage the reader!

- Use headings, e.g. background, aims, methodology
- Ensure diagrams are useful and legible (if used)

## Clearly state...

- Aims/hypothesis/discovery (risk is OK!)
- Importance
- Novelty
- Timeliness
- Methodology

## Research plan should be...

- Robust
- Realistic (plan a budget)
- Informative
- Accurate
- Appropriately referenced (not just to your own work)

# Benefits

---

Clearly state... **with evidence/citations**

- Ways in which the proposed research has the potential to lead to economic, environmental or health benefits to New Zealand
  - Demonstration of benefit does not have to be direct, or foreseeable, but rather that the area of research has potential benefit
  - This includes situations where the potential benefit is not imminent or accrued in a linear fashion
- The rationale for the research to be carried out in New Zealand
- The comparative advantages of a New Zealand-based team
- The benefits that could accrue with the research being carried out in New Zealand

Although the research may not have the potential for short-term benefits, there may be longer-term benefits or possible impacts that you can consider.

Awarded grants – across the whole Fund – will be monitored to ensure approximately 50% of funding supports proposals that have the potential to result in economic benefit to New Zealand



# Roles and Resources

---

A chance to convince the panel that you have thought about the practical requirements of your work plan

Do:

- Discuss who will specifically do what (with a justification of your planned FTEs, including any students or post-docs)
- Discuss any resources specific to this project
- Include ethical or regulatory considerations (Fast-Start and Standard)

Do not:

- Take lots of space to describe the background and expertise of the PI(s) and AI(s) in general terms
- Use this space to extend the research or benefit sections

# Roles and Resources – Fast-Start

---

You should be involved in your own independent research – not just part of a larger group's programme

Do:

- **Provide evidence for how the proposed research will support your independent research career**

**You will need to convince the panel of your independence!**

- Discuss opportunities for your career development
- If you choose a Mentor, describe their role

Mentors:

- Should advise on project management, career development and professional development. Usually someone from your organisation
- Should **not** contribute to research or experimental design, analysis and interpretation etc.

# General tips

---

## Consider your audience

### Make your writing clear, accessible and engaging

- Keep sentences short – make each one count
- Define abbreviations and use sparingly
- Avoid repetition (in particular, avoid repeating your summary in the background section)
- Avoid hype
- Avoid unnecessary jargon and technical terms
- Check for spelling and grammatical errors
- Ensure your proposal is framed to fit Marsden criteria

# Follow the rules

---

- Respect page limits
- Don't alter font size, line spacing or margin size from the templates
- Include titles and author names for sources listed in the reference list and CVs

**Formatting breaches can result in your proposal being ruled ineligible – make sure you read the guidelines!**



# Vision Mātauranga resources

---

Detailed resources on how to include Vision Mātauranga in your proposal are available from our guidelines and website

Consider if the following categories apply to your research:

- Research with no specific Māori component
- Research specifically relevant to Māori
- Research involving Māori
- Māori-centred research
- Kaupapa Māori research

# Before submitting

---

- Make sure you have completed all sections carefully – research section, benefits section, and Vision Mātauranga (if appropriate)
- Get people to read your proposal (including non-specialists)
- Download a PDF to check (**formatting/eligibility**):
  - Are the correct CVs uploaded?
  - Are all the sections in the right place and successfully converted to PDFs?
  - If images are included, are these displayed correctly?
  - Has the text been converted without loss of formatting?

# More questions?

---

- Guidelines and FAQs should answer most questions.  
Available on our website:
  - <https://www.royalsociety.org.nz/what-we-do/funds-and-opportunities/marsden>
- Talk to your Research Office
- If all else fails: email [marsden@royalsociety.org.nz](mailto:marsden@royalsociety.org.nz)

---

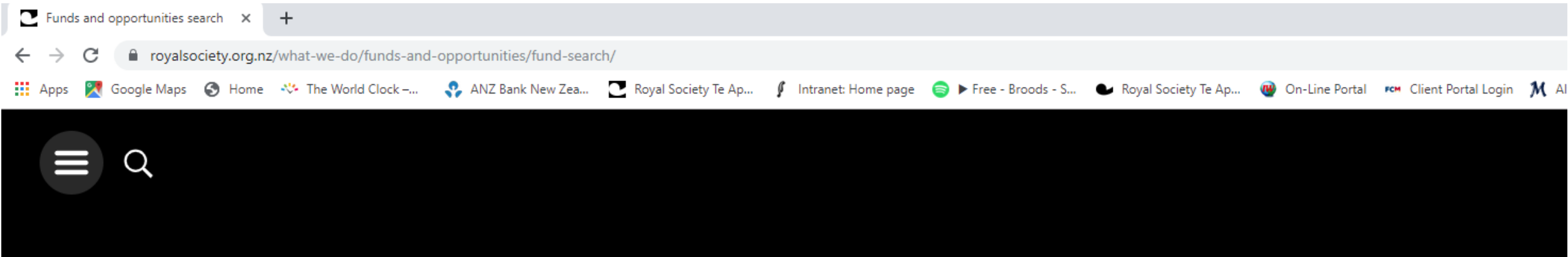
# Other Funding Opportunities

What is on offer from Royal Society Te Apārangi?

[EXPLORE](#) | [DISCOVER](#) | [SHARE](#)

ROYAL  
SOCIETY  
TE APĀRANGI

# Funds and opportunities search



## Funds and opportunities search

Use this search tool to find funds and opportunities you could apply for

I am a:

-- Select Option

▼

-- Select Option --

Student (school)

Postgraduate

Early Career Researcher

Researcher

Teacher

I am seeking:

Post Graduate

▼

### OUR FUNDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- < Funds and opportunities search
- > Marsden Fund
- > Catalyst Fund
- > Science Teaching Leadership Programme
- > CREST Awards
- > Powering Potential
- > Charles Fleming Fund
- > Raewyn Good Study Award for Māori and Pasifika Social Science Research
- > RHT Bates Postgraduate Scholarship

# Research Funding at Royal Society Te Apārangi

---

- **Marsden Fund:** *Supporting excellent investigator-initiated research*
  - Marsden Standard and Fast-Start grants
- **Catalyst Fund:** *Advancing global science partnerships for New Zealand*
  - Catalyst: Influence, Leaders and Seeding
- **Tāwhia te Mana Research Fellowships:** *Supporting individual Fellowship and scholarship opportunities*
  - Mana Tūāpapa Future Leader Fellowships
  - Mana Tūānuku Research Leader Fellowships
  - Mana Tūārangi Distinguished Researcher Fellowships
- **Human Frontier Science Program** (International award): *Funding high-risk, interdisciplinary, intercontinental, collaborative, fundamental life science research, with a philosophy of “science without borders”*
  - Long-term and Cross-Disciplinary Postdoctoral Fellowships
  - Program and Emerging Investigator Grants

# Other Royal Society Te Apārangi opportunities

---

- **Schools and Teachers;** *Providing teachers and students with learning and leadership opportunities*
  - Science Teaching Leadership, Powering Potential, Taiao Aronui
- **Postgraduate Awards;** *Supporting with study scholarships and travel awards*
  - Raewyn Good Study Award for Māori and Pasifika Social Science Research, RHT Bates Postgraduate Scholarship, New Zealand Ecohydraulics Trust Travel Award, Falling Walls Lab New Zealand, Sir Hugh Kawharu Masters Scholarship
- **Early Career Researchers;** *Supporting with research fellowships and travel awards*
  - Falling Walls Lab New Zealand, World Data System Data Stewardship Award, James G. Hay Travel Award
- **Researchers;** *Supports with research funding, fellowships and awards*
  - James G. Hay Travel Award, Charles Fleming Senior Scientist Award, Charles Fleming Award for Environmental Achievement, Hutton Fund, Skinner Fund, Charles Fleming Publishing Award

# Ngā mihi

EXPLORE | DISCOVER | SHARE

ROYAL  
SOCIETY  
TE APĀRANGI