



**Cancer
Society**

Te Kāhui Matepukupuku
o Aotearoa



**Hei
Āhuru
Mōwai**

Māori Cancer
Leadership
Aotearoa

Māori Cancer Researcher Awards 2026

PhD Scholarships

Application Guidelines

Applications Close
Friday 16 October

Document Contents

1.	Introduction	3
1.1	Scholarship Round Purpose	3
1.2	About the Cancer Society of New Zealand	3
	Research and Innovation at the Cancer Society	3
1.3	About Hei Āhuru Mōwai	4
2.	Scope	5
3.	Eligibility	5
4.	Grant Details	7
5.	Application process and timelines	8
	5.1 Submission	9
	5.2 Reporting	9
	5.3 Privacy provisions	9
6.	Applicant information	10
7.	Letters of Support	10
8.	Assessment criteria	11
9.	Eligible costs	12
10.	Research ethics approval	13
11.	Contract information and institutional approval	16

1. Introduction

1.1 Scholarship Round Purpose

The aim of the Cancer Society's Annual National Research Grant Round is to fund high-quality research across the cancer continuum (including hauora, mātauranga Māori, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and supportive care). This joint scholarship round between Cancer Society and Hei Āhuru Mōwai is for PhD scholarships for Māori involved in cancer research.

1.2 About the Cancer Society of New Zealand

The Cancer Society's vision is "Working together towards a future free from cancer".

The Cancer Society's mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of cancer. We support anyone, anywhere, with any cancer. Our focus areas include:

Providing community support to people affected by cancer, their families/whānau and carers.

Advocating for better outcomes: we drive change that achieves equitable outcomes across the cancer continuum.

Supporting research and innovation: by increasing investment in research, and driving targeted, equitable and evidence-based outcomes.

Partnering for impact: by working collaboratively with organisations that share similar goals to the Cancer Society.

The Cancer Society is reliant on funding support from the communities in which it works

Research and Innovation at the Cancer Society

The Cancer Society's [Research and Innovation Strategy](#) highlights our big dream to build the research foundations for a comprehensive national cancer network that connects people, knowledge, and resources to enable coordinated research activity and increase access and equitable health outcomes. This network will be equity-led, uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi and embed Māori leadership

Priority populations

Our strategy prioritises Māori, Pacific peoples, and those living in rural communities, as these populations experience the greatest inequities in cancer outcomes across Aotearoa New Zealand. When awarding grants, careful consideration is given to the potential impact of research proposals on these priority populations and the extent to which they contribute to improving equity in cancer outcomes

Our Strategic Priorities:

- **Strengthening the cancer research workforce** by supporting early-career researchers, clinical professionals, and medical and allied health students to engage in research.
- **Elevating lived experience in research and innovation** to ensure the research we support reflects real-world needs.
- **Increasing access to clinical trials** by increasing support for, and engagement with activities that integrate research into care.

You can contact the Cancer Society's Research & Innovation team with any questions during the grant application process at research@cancer.org.nz

1.3 About Hei Āhuru Mōwai

Hei Āhuru Mōwai Māori Cancer Leadership Aotearoa is a national network of Māori cancer professionals, clinicians, researchers and whānau who are committed to Rangatiratanga in cancer control, eliminating cancer inequities between Māori and non-Māori and advocating for better outcomes for whānau.

Tā mātou pae kahurangi i te tau 3000. Our vision:

Ko te matepukupuku ki te pō,
ko ngā whānau Māori ki Te Wheiao,
ki Te Ao Mārama.

Tō mātou whāinga matua. Our mission:

To embed Rangatiratanga into cancer control, eliminate cancer inequities between Māori and non-Māori and advocate for better outcomes for whānau.

Ō mātou uara. Our values:

Āhurutanga is our backbone. Rangatiratanga is our purpose.

Whāngai Pae Tawhiti. Our 2023–2026 strategic goals:

Our overarching strategic goal: Rangatiratanga in cancer control.

- **Māngai:** To be the trusted expert voice for Māori cancer control.
- **Rangahau:** To support Māori cancer research.
- **Mātauranga:** To build and optimise our collective Māori cancer intelligence.
- **Āhuru Rourou:** To build a fit-for-purpose and thriving resource-filled whare.

You can contact us during the grant application process at

rangahau@heiahurumowai.org.nz

2. Scope

The Cancer Society and Hei Āhuru Mōwai are committed to equity. This grant round will consider applications that are relevant to Māori cancer outcomes across the continuum.

Applications peripheral to cancer/matepukupuku should not be submitted.

3. Eligibility

The Māori Cancer Researcher Awards are for individuals who are committed to hauora Māori, maximising Māori health gains, addressing existing cancer inequities, and/or fostering Māori health aspirations. We value applications that include kaupapa Māori and mātauranga Māori.

To be eligible you must:

- Be of Māori descent.
- Be resident in Aotearoa New Zealand

- Have academic supervision which includes at least one Māori supervisor.
 - Those unable to identify a Māori supervisor are encouraged to get in touch prior to applying.
- Intend to enroll or already be enrolled in a PhD. Those who have not yet enrolled for their proposed course of study but are intending to do so may apply for this scholarship. In this case any award will be conditional on the applicant's successful enrolment in a PhD at an Aotearoa New Zealand Wānanga or University.

4. Grant Details

Description	Maximum value of award	Maximum grant duration
PhD scholarships provide funding for students to undertake advanced research in the field of cancer, leading to a Doctorate in Philosophy from an Aotearoa New Zealand Wānanga or University.	\$45,000 per annum stipend \$10,000 per annum for tuition fees \$10,000 across the duration of the award as a tikanga allowance	36 months FTE

- Applicants should fill in the [Application Form](#) on our grant portal.
- Priority will be given to applications in areas where grant opportunities are limited (for example, mātauranga Māori, nursing, allied health care).
- Applicants should include letters of support from their supervisors with clear detail about the research or training environment and consider the division of supervisory responsibilities. Applicants can also include additional letters of support as appropriate. We encourage supervisors and hosting institutions to read the *Āhuru Ākonga* recommendations for looking after emerging Māori cancer researchers on [Hei Āhuru Mōwai website](#).
- Part-time students are welcome to enrol, noting that for such students the scholarship would be pro-rated. The award will not be granted for a period longer than the equivalent of three years fulltime.

5. Application process and timelines

All grants will be awarded in a competitive process, for all individuals who meet the above eligibility criteria to apply for funding. Applications will be assessed by the Māori Cancer Researcher Awards Assessment Committee (MCRAAC), who will also make the final funding decision.

Applications will be assessed through several stages:

Task	Date
Applications open	1 September 2026
Applications close	16 October 2026
MCRAAC Meeting	November 2026
Liaising with applicants as needed	November 2026
Acceptance letters and contracts sent to successful applicants	December 2026
Contracts returned	January 2027

Applications made in te reo Māori must be accompanied with a translation into English. Please contact the Cancer Society if you need assistance with this at research@cancer.org.nz.

The Cancer Society and Hei Āhuru Mōwai may refuse to consider an application if it considers actions of the applicant to be contrary to the values and interests of the Cancer Society and Hei Āhuru Mōwai or may bring the Cancer Society and/or Hei Āhuru Mōwai into disrepute.

5.1 Submission

The [Application Form \(available on our portal\)](#) should be completed and submitted in the grant portal by **16 October 2026**. Please note that your application can only be submitted by your Host Institution. Your research office may have their own internal deadlines so that they can provide a full review and meet the Cancer Society's submission deadline, so make sure you are aware of internal deadlines.

5.2 Reporting

Applicants successful in receiving funding through this unique Grant Round will be required to submit annual progress reports and a final report. Funding for each subsequent year will only be released upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report. At year 2, in addition to the student's report, the supervisor must submit a report on the student's progress.

Reports will include a lay person's summary which may be used to inform the public about the work we support, an update on the project's timelines and milestones; whether they are met, partially met, or delayed, and an explanation for any delays. The Cancer Society and Hei Āhuru Mōwai recommends writing lay summaries at the **reading age of twelve years old**. Annual reports in Te Reo Māori must also provide the English translation.

5.3 Privacy provisions

The information requested in an application will be used for assessing that application and, in a non-identifiable form, some information will be used for Cancer Society statistical purposes. All research applications will be stored in a secure place. Security and confidentiality will be preserved for any application declined. Personal information contained in the application may be made available to external referees and Māori Cancer Researcher Awards Assessment Committee reviewing the application. When an application is successful, the Cancer Society and Hei Āhuru Mōwai reserves the right to publish the applicants' names, details of the Host Institution, lay summary and funding awarded. You can find the Cancer Society's privacy policy online [here](#).

6. Applicant information

Whanaungatanga – relationship to research: tell us about how you came to this project– we want to know your story of how/why/when this research question called to you. You can include wairuatanga, tohu, ōhaki or any other tikanga Māori to describe this.

Ngā hua – other outcomes of receiving this scholarship: what would getting this scholarship mean to you and your whānau? We would like to know what other hua/outcomes this scholarship could provide for you.

As part of the introduction of the application, applicants are invited to provide a video submission (less than 1 minute) to introduce themselves and their relationship to the work. The video will be played at the start of the assessment of the application. Video submission is not compulsory and will not be assessed directly but is strongly encouraged in order to provide the assessing committee with a more personal view of the application.

7. Letters of Support

Letters of support must be provided with this application from the supervisory team and any other relevant persons, using our template which can be found [here](#). The supervisors must confirm that the PhD applicant's project is appropriately resourced for the duration of the project.

8. Assessment criteria

All applicants should demonstrate that their research project meets the following parameters:

- **Mana taurite me te tino rangatiratanga – Significance of the project to Equity, improved Māori cancer outcomes, and tino rangatiratanga:** addresses important mātauranga/research questions, likely to result in significant benefit for tangata and whānau affected by cancer or advancement in the understanding of cancer. Contribution to increased knowledge, health, social and/or economic gains, appropriate pathway for knowledge transfer and responsiveness to Māori.
- **Māori community links, health background and potential:** involvement in Māori communities, has good knowledge of the health sector, and is committed to pursuing Māori cancer research.
- **Nohoanga – Research environment:** There is a strong commitment from supervisors, mentors and the Host Institution. Qualifications, experience and knowledge in the proposed research area, right mix of expertise including Māori data sovereignty, appropriate networks and collaborations, history of productivity and delivery, and supportive research environment. This includes kuia and kaumatua. Opportunities for training and career development have been actively identified and supported by the supervisory team.
- **Significance/ contribution to the goals of Hei Āhuru Mōwai and the Cancer Society:** the expected outcomes of the proposed research will add value and contribute to the goals of the [Cancer Society](#) and [Hei Āhuru Mōwai](#).
- **Ngā pēwheatanga – Research design:** clear objectives and deliverables and appropriate research design.
- **Academic ability of the applicant:** applicant qualifies to enrol in a PhD degree.

9. Eligible costs

Category	Acceptable Costs (not exhaustive)
Tuition	• Actual tuition cost as charged by the institution. • Student services fee
Tikanga allowance	• Wānanga costs • Koha for kaitiaki /kuia/kaumatua • Cultural supervision

10. Research ethics approval

General guidelines to applicants:

- It is the responsibility of the Host Institution to evaluate the ethics involved in any research on human or animal experiments or utilizing personal information. However, the Cancer Society wishes to be fully informed on the ethical arrangements covering any work for which it supplies funds.
- The applicant must supply a copy of any submission for ethical approval that is awaiting approval and evidence of approval must be supplied to the Cancer Society before any research procedures involving animal or human materials, or personal information may commence.
- Research ethical approval(s) must come from an accredited Ethics Committee(s). Please refer to the HRC Research Ethics Guidelines for details on how to apply and a list of accredited Ethics Committees – <https://www.hrc.govt.nz/resources/hrc-ethics-committee>
- If appropriate, more than one Ethics Committee approval may be necessary, for example, if the research geographically covers an area serviced by more than one committee or if human and animal studies will be undertaken. All committees applied to for approval should be listed.
- Where a dispute arises over the ethics of experimentation, the Cancer Society reserves the right to refer the matter to the Health Research Council Committee on Ethics and Research for arbitration.

Guidelines for applicants on research involving animals:

- Animals used for research purposes shall be lawfully acquired. They shall be kept and used in strict compliance with the relevant laws and by laws.
- Any research project involving animals must be approved by a properly constituted Animal Ethical Advisory Committee and conform to the guidelines for Institutional Animal Ethics Committees, of the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee.
- An Act of Parliament (October 1984) established the National Animal Ethics Advisory Committee, to advise the Minister of Agriculture. Further information on how to apply for Animal Ethics approval can be found here:

Guidelines for applicants on research involving human subjects:

All research supported by the Cancer Society on human subjects must conform to the code of ethical principles established by the Health Research Council of New Zealand. In addition, research funded by the Cancer Society must conform to the below principles¹:

- The applicant and any other researchers involved must be satisfied by forethought, by study of the literature, and by consultation that the proposed research is likely to contribute to the understanding of the matter being investigated.
- The Investigator must be satisfied that the research on human subjects is based as far as possible on the results of experiments conducted “in vitro” or on animals.
- The Investigator must be satisfied that adequate facilities will be used for the solution of the problem being investigated.
- The Investigator must be satisfied that the research will not impose unreasonable discomfort or hazard upon the subject. In order to ensure the safety of the subject in an untoward event, the Investigator must ensure that appropriately qualified persons are present during experiments and that proper facilities are at hand to ensure the safety of the subject in any emergency.
- The Investigator must modify appropriately or discontinue the research if it becomes apparent that the procedure is likely to cause unreasonable risk to the subject.
- Before the research project is undertaken, the Investigator must obtain the free informed consent of the subject or their guardian in writing and in the presence of a witness. The consent must be obtained without the exertion of pressure on the subject and without being dependent on any obligation of the subject toward the Investigator.
- The Investigator should be satisfied that the subject, or the guardian, has been

¹ Grants may be terminated at any time and without notice should the Cancer Society or Hei Āhuru Mōwai find that these principles have not been observed.
Māori Cancer Researcher Awards
PhD Scholarship 2026 Guidelines

informed, in terms capable of being understood, of the nature and purpose of the proposed research, the methods to be employed, and the possible risks and discomfort that may be involved.

- Special care must be taken in the case of subjects at particular risk, for example, children, the mentally infirm, the unconscious patient, and pregnant and nursing women. Children should never be the subjects of research which could appropriately be undertaken in adults and, in the case of unconscious patients, the written consent of the next of kin must always be obtained.
- The subject, or the guardian, shall be free at any time to withdraw consent for further participation in the research and must be made aware of Their right in this respect. Such withdrawal does not in any way prejudice the subjects further management and treatment as a patient.
- New therapeutic or experimental procedures which are at the stage of early evaluation, and which might have long-term effects should not be undertaken unless full provision has been made for long-term care and observation of the subject.

Applications must be submitted through the [Cancer Society Grant Portal](#). User guides for the Grant Portal can be found [here](#). Applicants must sign up for an account to access the application form.

If you are having any issues accessing or using the portal, please contact Research Manager at research@cancer.org.nz.

A note on word limits for each section of the application form:

Uia mai te pātai – Research Question: 400 words

Ngā whaingā – Aims and objectives: 200 words

Ngā pēwheatanga – Research design: 500 words

Mana taurite me te tino rangatiratanga – Significance of the project to Equity, improved Māori cancer outcomes, and tino rangatiratanga: 400 words

Take-utu-ea – Stakeholder engagement, communication and dissemination: 300 words

11. Contract information and institutional approval

Once your application is completed and you submit it, your application will be sent to your Host Institution for final review. Only your Host Institution is able to submit applications to the Cancer Society. Your research office may have their own internal deadlines so that they can provide a full review and meet the Cancer Society's submission deadline, so make sure you are aware of internal deadlines. If your Host Institution is not listed as an option in the application form, please contact research@cancer.org.nz prior to the internal deadline.

Successful applicant institutions will be asked to sign a research contract. The current research contract template is available [here](#)

When a matter relating to research arises and the Cancer Society does not have a stated policy they may follow any existing guidelines of the Health Research Council.