

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Review of the Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies**

#### **Background**

The Stout Research Centre for New Zealand Studies (SRC) at Te Herenga Waka – Victoria University of Wellington undertakes and promotes interdisciplinary research on the history, society and culture of Aotearoa New Zealand. The Centre was established in 1984 with the support of the Stout Trust. The Centre's name honours former Prime Minister and Chief Justice Robert Stout, the founder of Victoria University of Wellington and its first Chancellor.

The Centre sits within the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences – Te Wāhanga Aronui. The SRC provides thesis supervision to Masters and PhD students and hosts independent scholars and visiting academics, as well as running an annual programme of seminars, lectures and conferences.

The Centre hosts the JD Stout Fellow, who is appointed annually with funding from the Stout Trust. The Fellowship, established in 1985, was created to foster research on New Zealand society, history and culture by providing the Fellow with an opportunity to work within an academic environment for the year of tenure.

Since January 2019, the Museum and Heritage Studies Programme has also been part of the Stout Research Centre. This postgraduate programme is the leading programme of its kind in New Zealand, taught in partnership with key national organisations.

The SRC currently sits outside any School/wider administrative unit; the Director of the SRC currently reports to the Dean, FHSS.

From July 2021, as a result of retirements, permanent staffing in the SRC will consist of one professional staff member and the two academic staff members of the Museum and Heritage Studies Programme.

#### **Strategic context**

Given these recent staffing changes and in light of the University's refreshed Strategic Plan 2020-2024, it is timely to consider the mission of the Stout Research Centre within the Faculty and the wider University. The Strategic Plan, which positions Te Herenga Waka as a global-civic University with its marae at its heart, includes the following strategies that are particularly relevant to this review:

- Ambitious research for transformative impact.
- Engagement that deepens relevance, engagement and reputation.
- Belonging to the Asia-Pacific region.

The Strategic Plan also identifies the following distinctive attributes of the University:

- Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Living and making the Wellington vibe.

Also of particular relevance is the following excerpt from the University's vision statement:

As a world-leading capital city university, we play a prominent role in the life of Wellington and beyond. We lead thinking on the major issues that affect the environmental, societal, cultural, and economic wellbeing of Aotearoa New Zealand, the Asia-Pacific, and the wider world. . . . We pursue ambitious research designed to challenge the status quo. We leverage our research strengths and the distinctive

advantages and opportunities that Wellington provides to deliver transformative outcomes.

As a research centre for New Zealand Studies, the SRC can play an important role in the achievement of these goals. In particular, as a Centre dedicated to research on the history, society and culture of Aotearoa New Zealand, the SRC can also make a significant contribution to the University's commitment to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, te Reo Māori and mātauranga Māori, thereby contributing to the objectives of Mai i te Iho ki te Pae – the Māori strategic outcome framework.

The overarching goal of the review is to ensure that the Stout Research Centre is well-positioned and supported to continue to contribute to the University's strategic goals.

The review will focus on the activities of the SRC as a research centre, as per the terms of reference below. While the curricular offerings and staffing of the Museum and Heritage Studies (MHST) Programme do not fall within the scope of the review, the panel may consider the role of MHST within the Stout Research Centre as part of the review.

### **Terms of Reference**

In reviewing the past performance and considering the future direction of the SRC, the panel will be asked to consider the following:

#### **1. Strategic direction, goals and mission**

- The present and future vision and mission for the SRC within Te Herenga Waka.
- The extent to which the SRC's mission is consistent with the University's strategic direction, including the goals of the Strategic Plan 2020-2024, the Research Strategy 2020-2024, and Mai i te Iho ki te Pae 2020-2040.

#### **2. High quality research**

- The extent to which the SRC demonstrates and/or develops research excellence.
- The ability of the Centre to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration within the University.
- The Centre's ability to gain external research funding to support its activities.

#### **3. Effective community and public engagement**

- The extent to which the SRC engages effectively with Wellington communities, alumni and benefactors.
- The contributions of the Centre to the University's intellectual influence in Wellington.

#### **4. Organisation, administration and resources**

- The effectiveness and financial sustainability of the Centre's organisational and administrative structures in relation to its current functions and anticipated developments.