To whom it may concern

Firstly, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the additional changes proposed to improve the PBRF, and in particular, the proposal the Minister is currently considering to increase the proportion of PBRF funding allocated based on the amount of external research income that tertiary education organisations attract.

The HRC Board reviewed the material provided and discussed the proposal being considered by the Minister, at their most recent Board meeting on Tuesday 29 April. The following is a summary of the Board’s discussion:

- The HRC Board support greater weighting being given to external research income. This will ensure that the value of research from the research-users perspective receives greater recognition.

- The HRC Board particularly support the proposal to weight income from industry and from overseas, as it is important to incentivise access to alternative funding sources.

- However, the HRC Board are concerned about the consequences of incentivising higher levels of bidding for contestable funds that are unlikely to grow. There is already significant oversubscription of bidding for HRC funds from the Universities. Increased bidding would be costly to both Universities (with respect to the time and resource committed to proposal writing) and to the HRC (with respect to the time and resource required to manage the assessment process). It would also have a negative impact on success rates and therefore the morale of the research sector.

On behalf of the HRC and the Board, thanks again for the opportunity to be part of the consultation process. We look forward to hearing the outcome and wish you all the best with the process from here on in.

Dr Tania Pocock
Group Manager – Research Policy, Strategy & Evaluation

Mr Lex Davidson
Chief Financial Officer

9 May 2014