

ABOUT MOTU ECONOMIC & PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

Motu Economic and Public Policy Research is an independent research institute operating as a charitable trust. Motu staff undertake systematic public-interest research that directly impacts government policy, and which is lauded and referenced around the world.



THE BACKGROUND

Motu has developed a sound reputation for its well-informed, well-reasoned and fastidiously researched studies on public policy issues. Its success is based on its fully independent status (not compromised by any ideology or political position), the experience and qualification of its senior researchers, and its links to a large pool of internationally renowned experts.

Motu was registered as a charitable trust on 1 September 2000, and in 2002 was accepted as an affiliate organisation of the Royal Society of New Zealand. It has approximately 20 staff and is located in Wellington.

A SUCCESSFUL VISION

Motu is the top-ranked economics research organisation in New Zealand and in the top ten global economic think tanks, according to the Research Papers in Economics (RePEc) website, which ranks all economists and economic research organisations in the world based on the quantity and quality of their research publications.

Motu's five senior fellows – who all have PhDs from top international universities, as well as extensive public policy experience – work together as a cooperative: each fellow identifies valuable research questions that they can potentially answer, and finds funding to support their work on these topics, as well as the broader research, training and education missions.

One of Motu's guiding principles is its commitment to freely disseminating research findings. Motu insists on a clause in every research contract stating that the results of the research will be published publicly, rather than allowing the research funder to decide whether the results will be released or not. Motu also invests heavily in the training and intellectual development of young Kiwis, hiring the cream of university economics graduates for 2-4

year stints before sending them off to top PhD programmes or into important government policy roles.

RECENT WORK

Some recent Motu projects, which received significant acclaim here and internationally include:

- Finishing up a five-year Marsden-funded research project on wellbeing that delivered new measures of wellbeing applicable to both New Zealand and internationally, while providing new understanding of how policies affect wellbeing both within and across countries.
- Shaping New Zealand's Low-Emission Future: a project to help inform climate change policy making and private-sector actions, and significantly benefit New Zealand's longer-term development.
- Creating a handbook for the World Bank for any jurisdiction wanting to design or revamp an emissions trading system.
- An analysis of the government's '90-day trial period' policy for new employees, which showed that neither the proponents' claims for its employment-enhancing benefits nor its opponents' worries about harm to workers were borne out in the data.
- A number of papers for the Productivity Hub (Treasury; the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment; Statistics NZ; and the Productivity Commission) focused on expanding the use of the microeconomic data held by Statistics NZ to study patterns and causes of productivity in New Zealand firms.
- Research investigating resilient urban futures.
- Work with National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research on the economic effects of climate impacts.
- Ongoing work with Te Pūnaha Matatini, a Centre of Research Excellence focused on the characterisation and analysis of complex systems and networks.

"They are probably the most august organisation of their type in New Zealand and are very highly regarded internationally for the quality of their work."

HARVEY BROOKES, MANAGER, AUCKLAND PLAN STRATEGY AND RESEARCH