

IHA Statement

**In response to the New Zealand government announcement that the Humanities and Social Sciences panels will be disbanded and no longer supported by the Marsden Fund**

December 2024

Irish Humanities Alliance



On 4 December 2024, the Minister for Science, Innovation and Technology, Judith Collins, announced that the Marsden Fund would focus on core scientific research to the detriment of the humanities and social sciences. Collins' announcement signalled that the humanities and social sciences panels will be immediately disbanded and no longer supported.<sup>1</sup>

The Marsden Fund has been a vital public source of researcher-driven funding in New Zealand since its establishment in 1994. During the last three decades the Fund, administered by the Royal Society Te Apārangī, has benefitted New Zealand society contributing to social change and understanding across a broad range of fundamental matters.

The Marsden Fund operates under the Terms of Reference issued by the Minister of Research, Science and Innovation. The Royal Society Te Apārangī clarifies on its website that 'the research is not subject to government's socio-economic priorities, but is investigator initiated.'<sup>2</sup> The move by Minister Collins to disband two entire research areas which cover many academic disciplines, ensures that this funding will now be driven to discipline-specific areas informed by economic impact and utility.

The Irish Humanities Alliance stands in solidarity with our colleagues working in the humanities and social sciences across New Zealand and calls for this decision to be withdrawn. We support the assertion made by the Australasian Council of Deans of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities that 'the government's move to stop funding arts, social sciences and humanities research through the Marsden Fund will have far-reaching negative impacts on every Aotearoa New Zealander and must be reversed.'<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Judith Collins, '[Marsden Fund refocused for science with a purpose](#)', New Zealand government press release, 4 Dec. 2024.

<sup>2</sup> Royal Society Te Apārangī, [Background to the Marsden Fund](#).

<sup>3</sup> DASSH, '[Deans condemn Minister's cut to Humanities and Social Sciences research funding](#)', 4 Dec. 2024.

## **Further information**

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