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**Discourses of  
research policy in New Zealand, 1984-2005:  
Neoliberalism, tertiary education  
and national science**

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## Abstract

This thesis analyses research policy in the fields of New Zealand tertiary education and national science in the period 1984 - 2005. It poses the question: How has what can be done, said and written in tertiary education and science research shifted and how have shifts been constituted in policy and related texts? In addition, the study considers the overlapping and increasing convergence of research policy between the two fields (tertiary education and national science) as an example of what happens to previously discrete areas of policy development and their constitutive discourses under a state logic (and pervasive discursive formation) of neoliberalism. The key hypothesis is that the economic genre has come to dominate research discourses and related practices with increasingly problematic effects.

The study is underpinned by a poststructuralist/postmodern philosophical position which seeks to interrogate, historicise, problematise and politicise dominant research policy discourses. Jean Francois Lyotard's prophetic work, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984) is mobilised to argue that since at least the 1950s, the western world has been moving into a recognisably different mode of societal organisation and production. In the 2000s the role of technology and particularly computerisation in shaping our societies, identities and, as Lyotard argued, knowledge itself, is indisputable. Lyotard's analysis of the growing importance of innovation and 'techno-science' in the regeneration of international capital is highly pertinent to this study, as is his problematisation of notions of western 'progress' principally through a theorisation of the metanarrative of performativity.

The thesis is also strongly informed by Michel Foucault's work. Of particular interest is his work on the imbrication of power and knowledge, the value of close historical investigations and how subjects become governed and govern themselves through the (usually unconscious) uptake of circulating discourses. For both Foucault and Lyotard the study of ruptures, continuities, emergences and descents in institutional discourses provides evidence on which to base judgements about the limits of what can be said in the institution at any one time. They both advocate studying 'what we know so well' and 'rendering the normal strange' in order to consider how the contours of dominant discursive formations might be constituted and to generate the intellectual resources to explore how matters might be organised otherwise.

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## Acronyms

AARE – Australian Association for Research in Education

ACRI – New Zealand Association of Crown Research Institutes

AFWP – Academic Freedom Working Party

AHRC – Arts and Humanities Research Council

AIT – Auckland Institute of Technology

APEC – Asian Pacific Economic Cooperation

ARC – Australian Research Council

AT – Agency Theory

AUT – Auckland University of Technology

AUS – Association of University Staff

BERL – Business and Economic Research Limited

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CORES – Centres of Research Excellence

CRIs – Crown Research Institutes

CSRIO – Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation

DFEE – Department for Education and Employment (United Kingdom)

DSIR – Department of Scientific and Industrial Research

EFTS – Equivalent Full Time Student

ERMA – Environmental Risk Management Authority

FDA – Food and Drug Administration (of the United States Department of Health and Human Services)

FORST - Foundation of Research Science and Technology

GAL – Global Alliance Limited

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GE – Genetic engineering

GEM – Global Entrepreneurial Monitoring

GIF – Growth and Innovation Framework

GPS – Government Property Services

GMOs – Genetically Modified Organisms

HERDSA – Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia

HRC – Health Research Council

HUMANZ – Humanities Society of New Zealand/Te Whaingā Aronui

ICTs - Information and Communication Technologies

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ITANZ – Information Technology Association of New Zealand

KSA – Key Science Area

LIANZA – Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa

LSA – Life Sciences Network

MadGE – Mothers against Genetic Engineering

MAF – Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries

MAI – Multilateral Agreement on Investment

MoE – Ministry of Education

MORST – Ministry of Research, Science and Technology

MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

NERF – New Economy Research Fund

NRAC - National Research Advisory Council

NROs – Nominated Research Outputs

NZARE – New Zealand Association of Research in Education.

NZBR – New Zealand Business Roundtable

NZCER – New Zealand Council for Educational Research

NZPA – New Zealand Press Association

NZUSA – New Zealand University Students’ Association

NZVCC – New Zealand Vice Chancellors Committee

NZVIF – New Zealand Venture Investment Fund

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PBRF – Performance Based Research Fund

PCT – Public Choice Theory

PCET - Post-compulsory Education and Training

PGSF– Public Good Science Fund

PSRA – Public Scholarship and Research Agency

PSRWP – Post-school Scholarship and Research Working Party

PTE – Private Training Establishment

QPEC – Quality Public Education Coalition

RAE – Research Assessment Exercise

RCD – Rabbit Calicivirus Disease

R&D – Research and Development

RS&T – Research, Science and Technology

RO – Research Output

RMIT – Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology

RSNZ – Royal Society of New Zealand

S&T – Science and Technology

SIAC – Science and Innovation Advisory Council

SPO – Strategic Portfolio Outline

SPRU – Science Policy Research Unit

STAC – Science and Technology Advisory Committee

STEP – Science and Technology Expert Panel

TEAC – Tertiary Education Advisory Commission

TEC – Tertiary Education Commission

TEI – Tertiary Education Institution

TRB - Tertiary Research Board

UCOL – Universal College of Learning

UGC – University Grants Committee

UK – United Kingdom

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

US – United States of America

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